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WITH A PREFACE BY  
JOHN RUSKIN

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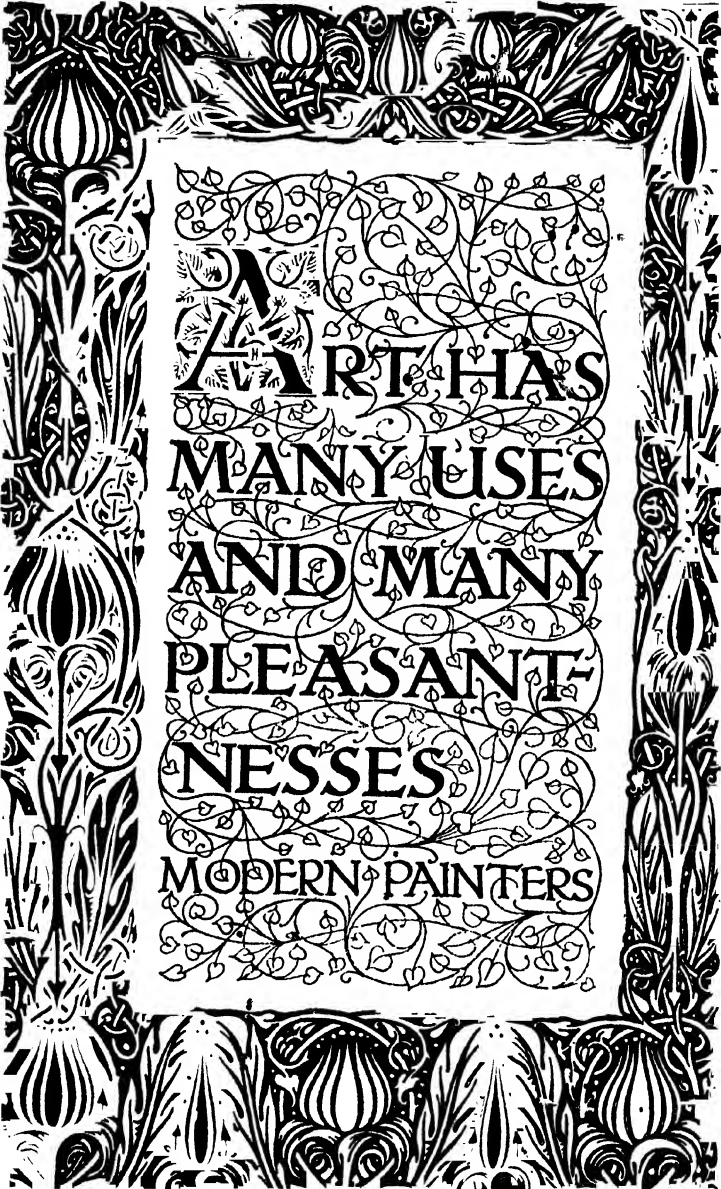
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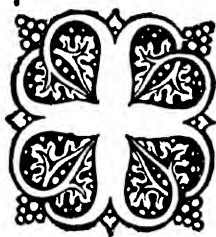
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FARM SERVANT  
TRANSLATED FROM  
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## PREFACE

HAVING been enabled to lay before the English reader, in Miss Alexander's "Songs of Tuscany," the truth of Italian peasant character animated by sincere Catholic religion, I find it my next most instant duty to place in parallel light the more calculating and prosperous virtue of Protestant Switzerland. This I am enabled to do merely by translating the story by Jeremias Gotthelf, called "Ulric the Farm Servant,"—which, if the reception granted it encourage me, will be followed, as in the original work, by its continuous history of "Ulric the Farmer."

I hoped to have translated at least one of these tales myself; but I only know the French translation, and have therefore accepted the gladly given help of a very dear friend and active member of St. George's Guild, Mrs. Firth, of Seathwaite Rayne, Ambleside. She has translated the whole book from the original German, adopting sometimes the terms of phrase which seemed more graceful or expressive from the French; and I have myself revised the whole, indulging my own preference for the French words or idioms where it seemed to me the German was cumbrous.<sup>1</sup> Of Gotthelf's

<sup>1</sup> My reasons for following Max Buchon's text in the main passages, will be understood at once, on reading the following note to me from Carlyle's niece, Miss Aitken, written nine years ago, when first I tried to bring Uli before the English reader.

"5, GREAT CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA, S. W.,

"June 6, 1876.

"DEAR MR. RUSKIN,—

"I take the liberty of sending with this a note that has come to-night from Lady Lothian, who, as you will see, is anxious to have a nomination to the Blue Coat School, for a boy she is interested in. I do not know whether the lady is right in supposing that you have the power of nomination, but if you had and were willing to give the required promise for next year, you would be



work and life, a succinct and sensible account will be found in Max Buchon's preface to the French edition of "The Joys and Sorrows of a Schoolmaster;" it is only necessary for the reader of this book to know that his real name was Albert Bitzium;—that he was an entirely benevolent and sincere German-Protestant clergyman, vicar of the little Bernese village of Herzogen-Buch-See, six leagues north of Berne; and that in character he was a combination of Scott and Sydney Smith, having the penetrative and imaginative faculty of the one, with the practical common-sense of the other. He cultivated his own farm so as to gain the respect and sympathy of his farmer parishioners,—fulfilled his pastoral duties with benevolent cheerfulness,—and wrote, in the quiet mornings of his well husbanded and well spent days, a series of stories of Swiss life, each beautifully, and with the subtlest literary art, led to its crisis through chains of modest and natural event; and in its course giving portraiture, exquisite in its sympathy, lovely in its delicacy, merciless in its veracity, of all that is best—and as much as it is needful to dwell on, of the worst—of the Swiss character

doing a kindness to one of the hardest-working and most self-denying people in the world.

"I hardly know how to put into words the awful fact I have to communicate. I have failed utterly and ignominiously in my attempt to translate Uli into English. I have tried over and over again and can't get on at all. It is written in cramped, foreign German,\* largely interspersed with Swiss words, which no dictionary will explain. My uncle has goaded me on with cruel jibes; but he read the book himself, and says now that *he* could at no period of his life have translated it. I need say no more, except that I am much grieved to find what would have been a great pleasure to me so far beyond my very small powers.

"You will be sorry to know that my uncle has been very weak and poorly of late weeks. He is, however, getting a little better as the weather improves.

"He sends his kindest and best love to you; and I am ever, dear Mr. Ruskin,

"Yours affectionately and respectfully,  
"MARY CARLYLE AITKEN."

\* This must have been a dialect copy; mine was in ordinary German, with occasional patois.—*Translator's Note.*

in the phase of change during which it came under his observation, when the noble customs of the past were still observed by the peasants of ancient and honourable family, while the recent influences of trade and foreign travellers were gradually corrupting alike the lower peasantry and the city population. As studies of general human character, I know nothing but Scott's soundest work which can compare with these books; nor I believe will any sensible reader find the details which give them local vivacity and precision other than interesting, if he will not read too much at a time. Partly to assist him in that wholesome economy of his attention, and partly because I want to get some of the book quickly into his hands for the sake of the immediate comparison of the Swiss with the Italian character, and of the Protestant with the Catholic faith, I publish this translation in parts, like most of my own books. Twelve parts, containing about forty-eight pages each, and published monthly, price one shilling, will contain the first story, "Ulric the Farm Servant." The little quotations at the heads of the chapters have been chosen by Mrs. Firth from my own books, and appear to me by no means the least valuable part of the volume!

J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, 30th June, 1885.

The following is a list of the works of Albert Bitzius (Jeremias Gotthelf) :—

Die Armennoth, 1840; Ein Sylvester Traum, 1842; Bilder u. Sagen aus der Schweiz, five parts, 1842-44; Wie Anna Bäbi Jowäger haushaltet u. wie es ihm mit dem doctor geht, two parts, 1843-44; Der Geldstag, oder: Die Wirthschaft nach der neuen Mode, 1846; Der Knabe des Tell (a Tale for the Young), 1846; Jacobs, des Handwerkgesellen, etc., two parts, 1846-47; Uli, der Knecht (second part: Uli, der Pächter), 1850; translated into English by Julia Firth, "Ulric, the Farm Servant," revised and edited with notes by J. Ruskin, 1886; Der Oberamtmann u. der Amtsrichter, 1853; Der Patrizier Spiegel (Historical Novel), 1854; Kurt von Koppigen (Deutscher Novellenschatz, vol. xii), 1871; Aus dem Bernerland (Six Tales from the Bernerland), 1872.

# CONTENTS

## PART I

CHAP.	PAGE
I. A MASTER AWAKES . . . . .	I
II. A CHEERFUL SUNDAY AT A PLEASANT FARM- HOUSE . . . . .	8
III. AN INSTRUCTION DURING THE NIGHT .	15
IV. ANOTHER CONVERSATION WITH A GOOD MASTER . . . . .	21

## PART II

I. AN ENEMY COMES AND SOWS TARES AMONGST THE WHEAT . . . . .	27
II. HOW THE GAME OF HURNUSS HELPED TO SOBER ULRIC . . . . .	31
III. HOW THE MASTER FOSTERS THE GROWTH OF THE GOOD SEED . . . . .	45
IV. AS SOON AS A MAN HAS MONEY, HE IS SURROUNDED BY SPECULATORS . . . . .	53
V. ULRIC RISES IN IMPORTANCE, ESPECIALLY IN THE EYES OF SERVANT-MAIDS . . . . .	59
VI. HOW ULRIC BARGAINS ABOUT A COW AND NEARLY GETS A WIFE . . . . .	66
VII. HOW A GOOD MAN UNDERSTANDS THE JUST DESIRES OF HIS SERVANT, AND FAVOURS THEM IN A DISINTERESTED MANNER . . . . .	77
VIII. HOW ULRIC LEFT HIS OLD PLACE . . . . .	92

CHAP.		PAGE
IX.	THE NUT-BROWN EYES . . . . .	97
X.	HOW ULRIC CONDUCTED HIMSELF AS HEAD-SERVANT . . . . .	104
XI.	THE FIRST SUNDAY IN A NEW PLACE . . . . .	112
XII.	HOW ULRIC WINS HIS WAY IN HOUSE AND FIELD, AND ALSO IN HONEST HEARTS . . . . .	122
XIII.	ULRIC SUCCEEDS IN OBTAINING YOUNG COWS AND NEW SERVANTS . . . . .	131
XIV.	HOW A FATHER AND SON BRING VARIOUS ARTS TO BEAR UPON A SERVANT . . . . .	146
XV.	HOW THEY FEAST, YET SOME ARE NOT SATISFIED . . . . .	153
XVI.	HOW THE EFFORTS OF A GOOD MOTHER CAN MAKE CROOKED WAYS STRAIGHT . . . . .	162
XVII.	THE HEAD-SERVANT FINDS FAVOUR IN THE EYES OF THE MASTER'S DAUGHTER . . . . .	169
XVIII.	ULRIC BECOMES CLEVER IN RECKONING . . . . .	182
XIX.	HOW A JOURNEY TO A WATERING-PLACE PUT OUT A RECKONING . . . . .	190
XX.	DOMESTIC WAR . . . . .	202
XXI.	THE BETROTHAL IS FOLLOWED BY DIS-QUIETUDE INSTEAD OF PEACE . . . . .	213
XXII.	OF A SECOND JOURNEY, WHICH ALSO LEADS TO UNEXPECTED EVENTS . . . . .	219
XXIII.	THE KNOTS BEGIN TO LOOSEN . . . . .	243
XXIV.	HOW AT LAST THE WEDDING TAKES PLACE . . . . .	253

# ULRIC, THE FARM SERVANT

## *A STORY OF THE BERNESE LOWLAND*

### PART I

#### CHAPTER I

##### A MASTER AWAKES

“Those who are superior by forethought and industry, have for their function to be the providences of the foolish, the weak, and the idle.”

THE night was dark ; still darker the place where a softly-restrained voice called repeatedly, “John.” The voice came out of the large bed which almost filled up a little chamber in a great farm-house. The farmer’s wife repeated, John ! wake up, until he began to rub his eyes and ask what was the matter. You must get up, said she, and look after the cattle ; it has struck half-past four, and Ulric only came in at two o’clock, quite tipsy. I thought you would wake, he made such a clatter tumbling on the stairs. Even if he is able to get up, it would not be safe to let him take a candle into the stable.

Servants are a mere nuisance nowadays, muttered the farmer, while he got a light and dressed himself. They are hard to find, and their wages never satisfy them ; one has to do the work oneself, without venturing to find fault. A man cannot be master without bringing the house about his ears.

But you cannot let things go on in this way, said his wife. Ulric’s offences are too frequent, and he has drawn all his wages in advance. I am not thinking of you only but Ulric also. If he is not reprovèd, he will go from bad to worse. We must make it a matter of conscience, for whatever people may say about the new fashion,

## 2      Ulric, the Farm Servant

masters are still masters. It is vain to say that if the servants do their work, the masters have no further concern with them; they are responsible before God and man for what they permit, and for what they put up with. I think also about the example to the children. You must take Ulric into the stübli,<sup>1</sup> after breakfast, and give him a talking to.

The peasants of Berne have a remarkable dignity of conduct and manner, and this is especially to be observed amongst the peasant aristocracy who have occupied the same farms from generation to generation, and who have family traditions, and a regard for family honour. They have the beautiful habit of avoiding all signs of strife and contention which can draw upon them the observation of their neighbours. The houses stand alone, surrounded by trees, and pervaded by an atmosphere of dignified calm; their inhabitants move about with measured demeanour, the neighing of the horses is heard, but no angry nor reproachful voices sound beyond the peaceful enclosure. Husbands and wives never differ before other people; they are often silent as to the faults of the servants, or give only a passing word or intimation to the one concerned. In special and serious cases, the master, after well considering what he has to say, calls the offender very quietly into the stübli, or seeks him in his solitary work. He speaks to him calmly in a right fatherly manner, showing him his fault in its true light, and setting its consequences fully before him, at the same time doing full justice to the offender. When the master has done this, he is satisfied; there is no excitement nor resentment in his manner, no change in his ordinary behaviour to the servant whom he has reprimanded. These private reproofs have generally a good effect, because they are given in a fatherly way, and because self-respect is preserved. It would be difficult to give a just idea of the self-control and composed calm which pervade such households.

<sup>1</sup> The master's room and bureau.

When Ulric's work was nearly finished, he appeared in the stable; he said nothing, and his master did not speak to him. When they were called to breakfast, the Paysan<sup>1</sup> went immediately to the fountain to wash his hands before entering, but Ulric delayed outside the house. Perhaps he would not have gone to breakfast at all, if the mistress had not herself called him by name.

He was ashamed to show his face, which was black and blue with the bruises of the preceding night. He had not yet learned that it is better to consider beforehand the consequences of an action, than to have to blush for it afterwards.

At table there was no reference to what had passed; even the maid-servants did not venture to exchange mocking smiles, because the master and mistress were serious. When they had done eating, the maids carried away the dishes, and Ulric, who had finished last, raised his elbows from the table, put on his hat, said grace, and was going out. Then the master said, Come here a minute, Ulric, I want to speak to you, led the way into the stübli, and shut the door; he settled himself at the head of the little table. Ulric remained standing near the door, and looked sheepish,—ready to be defiant or repentant, as the case might be.

Ulric was a fine, strong, and handsome young fellow, not yet twenty years of age, but there was something in his countenance which did not indicate great innocence or moderation, and which would soon make him look ten years older.

Listen, Ulric, began the master, things must not go on in this way any longer. I cannot allow you to be drunken and disorderly. I will not trust my horses and cows to a man who has his head full of brandy. It is not safe to let you go into the stable with a lantern,

<sup>1</sup> Henceforward I may often frankly use this word, being untranslatable into English, for the Master, and "Paysanne" for the Mistress, of an hereditary estate, cultivated by the family to which it belongs, and by servants who live in the house or attached offices, and eat in the hall with the family.



especially as you are continually smoking; too many houses have been set fire to in this way. I really do not know what you are thinking of, and what you imagine this will lead to.

Ulric replied that he had not set fire to anything, that he had always done his work; no one had to make him do it, and no one had to pay for what he drank, so it did not concern anyone.

But it concerns me, answered the master; it is *my* servant who drinks away his money, and everyone will wonder that Farmer Boden allows him to do so. It is true that you have not set fire to the house yet; but would not once be too often? would you ever have a happy hour if you did so, and if the children could not be saved, and were burned to death? And as to the work. *How* do you do it? I would rather you lay in bed all the day; instead of milking, you drop asleep under the cows; you see and hear nothing, and it is a misery only to look at you stumbling about. You gape and stare so that one sees plainly you have no mind for what ought to occupy you, but only for the girls of ill repute with whom you spend your time.

Ulric said he did not spend his time with girls of ill repute, and if he did not work enough to give satisfaction, he would go. He added that there was no sense in being worked to death for masters, who were never satisfied, do what you would; one was worse than another, they grudged wages, and gave bad food; the servants would soon have to catch grasshoppers and cockchafers when they wanted meat.

Now, Ulric, said the master, we will not talk so with each other. You are still in a passion, and it will be best for me not to speak to you just now. But I am really sorry about you. You might be a fine, industrious fellow. Some time ago I thought there was much good in you, and I rejoiced in it. But you are quite changed since you began drinking and staying out at night. You take no pains with anything, you have no goodwill, you sulk sometimes for a week together. Mark my words,

if you go on in this bad way you will come to a bad end. And do not imagine that I do not know of your visits to Anna-Lisi, the most dangerous girl about. With the life she leads, you are just the one she wants to keep in hand, so that, at any time it suits her, she can force you to marry her. How would that please you? and tell me, are you not afraid to put your head into the noose like so many others, who by taking the road you are taking, have fallen into depths of misery? Even in good times, when work is plentiful and prices are low, a man who is fit for nothing, and whose money is always too little for him, must either beg, or go into debt, or suffer hunger; "the dear time" always lasts for him, from year to year, for ever. Now consider about it, and if you will not alter, then go in God's name, I do not wish to keep you longer. Give me your decision in a week.

Ulric muttered that he did not want a week, he had considered already; but the master did not seem to hear him.

Well! how did he take it? asked the wife of her husband as he came out of the parlour.

I have not been able to do much with him, answered the Paysan. He has been on his high horse, and it might have been better if I had waited until he had slept off his liquor. However, I have given him time for consideration, and I must now await the result.

Ulric went away fiercely angry, as if the greatest injustice had been done to him; he dashed his tools about, and vented his ill-humour upon the cattle; the noise disturbed the master very much, but he restrained himself, only saying once, Gently, gently. Ulric had no conversation with his fellow servants; as the reproof had not been given before them, he need not let them know anything about it. But he looked crossly at them, and considered them as his enemies, and on the master's side. The consequence was that no one encouraged or set him up, and he had no opportunity of talking out his ill-humour and vowing that he would not stay in such a place an hour after his time was up.

Gradually the fumes of wine passed off, and his excitement gave place to an insupportable lassitude, which was soon followed by depression of spirits. As every movement is a painful effort to a weary body, so the weary soul is unable to rise, and oppressed by gloom and heaviness. It is cast down by what it formerly rejoiced in, and what seemed to it the most attractive, is now a source of disgust and weariness.

While Ulric was under the influence of wine, he was angry with his master; when this had passed away, he was angry with himself. He was no longer irritated at being reproached for his ill-doing, but he began to consider how he had been led into it. He had a painful recollection of the twenty-three batzen which he had made away with in one evening, and which he must work fifteen days to regain. He was vexed with the wine he had drunk,—with the innkeeper who had served it to him,—with everything which had contributed to his intemperance of the preceding night. When he thought of what the farmer had said of Anna-Lisi Gnagli, an anguish seized him which brought a cold sweat to his brow. Good heavens! how could he marry her? His purse was empty, he had only three good shirts and four bad ones, he owed money to the tailor and to the merchant for his last suit of clothes. Who would pay the wedding expenses? Who would provide for the setting-up of housekeeping? And how could he keep a wife and children when he was in debt as a single man? These ideas troubled the poor Ulric so much that if a woman's figure appeared in the distance, he ran to hide himself in the stable; he saw Anna-Lisi behind every kerchief, and if any one knocked at the door he trembled like an aspen leaf. Thus pre-occupied, he seemed to have lost all sense, he forgot what he had to do, and made all kinds of mistakes; he was ill at ease and discontented with himself, therefore he was discontented with everybody else: he gave no one a good word, and nothing pleased him. • The mistress cooked badly on purpose, and chose everything

that he disliked; the master troubled him with unnecessary work, the horses seemed all to have the staggers, and the cows gave him as much trouble as they could. They were the most stupid cows that ate grass on God's earth.

If Ulric had not been withheld by the want of money and the dread of meeting Anna-Lisi, he would have had recourse to wine to drown his ill-humour, regret, and vexation, but he stayed in, and showed himself as little as possible. It may seem surprising that his love had disappeared so quickly; but it had not been by any means a question of love. He had allowed himself to be led astray by custom and opportunity, by boastfulness and the false ideas of importance which are the ruin of many young peasants. Their compliance is attended by no sting of conscience, until they see the abyss of grief, misery, and despair into which they have well-nigh fallen.

The master and mistress behaved as if they perceived nothing, although she said several times she had never seen Ulric so morose: had not John spoken too sharply to him? He replied that he did not think he had. Ulric was not more vexed with him than with everyone else, and he believed he was chiefly vexed with himself. He would speak to him again on Sunday, there must be a decision one way or other. His wife urged him not to be too hard, they knew Ulric, and they might easily get a worse lad in his place.

## 8      Ulric, the Farm Servant

### CHAPTER II

#### A CHEERFUL SUNDAY AT A PLEASANT FARMHOUSE

“If you get up in the morning and resolve to see Nature, you will see it in a supernatural manner. You will hear with your spirit the morning star and his fellows sing together; also, you will hear the sons of God shouting together for joy with them, particularly the little ones,—sparrows, greenfinches, linnets, and the like.”

THE Sunday morning was bright, clear, and beautiful. The dew sparkled like diamonds on the sweet-scented meadow flowers and grasses, adorning them as brides in the boundless temple of the Lord. The wedding songs were sung by choirs of finches, blackbirds, and larks; the old mountains looked down as witnesses, bearded, grave, and solemn, with the roses of youth on their furrowed cheeks; and the golden sun was as the priest of God, scattering bridal blessings in his sparkling beams. The thousand-voiced song and the magnificence of the morning awoke the Paysan early, and he walked about his farm with a heart full of gratitude and gladness. As he went with high step and long strides through the thick grass, paused at the luxuriant corn-field and the well-kept plantation of gently-waving flax, or observed the trees laden with fruit, he did not think only of the profit he hoped to make, but he raised his heart in devout thankfulness to God, who had so richly prospered him, whose goodness fills the earth, and whose glory and wisdom are new every morning. He reflected that man's praise should not be wanting whilst all Nature was full of joy. As the tree in its stateliness, as the corn-field in its fulness, so man should show forth the praises of his Creator in his whole being, not only with his lips, but in his life. “Thanks be to God,” thought he; “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. It is true that we are only poor sinners, we have but a small beginning of goodness, but our hearts are turned towards Him.

We never eat without returning heartfelt thanks to Him, and we never spend a day in forgetfulness of Him." But he became sorrowful when he thought of Ulric, royally endowed as he was with health and strength, yet unmindful of his Creator, and basely misusing His gifts. He often stood still, considering what he could say to influence him for good. As he cared much for his own soul, he cared also for the souls of others. When a servant was sick in body he would send for the doctor, and he could not be less concerned in a case of soul sickness. That it is not so with all masters is one of the great misfortunes of this age.

The farmer delayed unconsciously, and the mistress said they would begin breakfast if the master did not come. At last he came in at the kitchen door with the kindly question, Is breakfast ready? She answered gently that they might have had it long before if he had been there,—whom could he have been talking with? He answered seriously, With the good God. The tears came into her eyes, and she looked at him very thoughtfully while she poured out the coffee, and the maids called the men, and placed the food upon the table.

The farmer broke the silence by saying, Who is going to church to-day? The wife said, I am, and I have already plaited my hair, that I may be in good time. Several child-voices said, I will go with you, mother. But the men and maids remained silent. When the master repeated the question, one wanted shoes, another stockings, and it was evident that no one had the least wish to go. Then he said this state of things must not continue; it was strange if they had time for everything except church-going. In the morning there was no getting anyone out of the house, in the afternoon they could not get off fast enough, and they stayed out as late as they could. He thought it a bad thing to have a mind for pleasure and folly, and no thought for their souls. And he must tell them quite plainly that no master could have confidence in servants who had cast God out of their hearts and become untrue to Him.

## 10      Ulric, the Farm Servant

To-day there was no reason for staying at home and lounging about the house, and he would not have it. Besides, he wanted some errands done. He must have forty pounds of salt; the two maids could fetch that and relieve each other. Hans Jacob (the other servantman) should go to the mill and ask when they could have some chaff; it was cheaper than going to Berne for it, and the miller who ground his corn would rather let him have it than another. But who will cook the dinner if you send everybody out? asked the mother. Oh, said the father, Anna-Bäbeli (his twelve-year-old little daughter) can see to it. She must learn to manage, and she will like to do so. Ulric will stay at home with me. Kleb is near calving, and things might go badly without care and attention. While saying these words he looked hard at the mother, who understood that he wished to be alone with Ulric, in order to talk with him, secured from the sharp ears of the curious maids. They thought it very hard to have to wash and comb themselves so soon. They liked to reserve their full splendour for the afternoon, and they were afraid the polish would be all worn off too early. As to dressing themselves twice in the day, that was not to be thought of by Bernese peasant maids. They could indeed look in the glass very often to see that all was in order, especially the little curl on the forehead. Hans was no better pleased; he had not shaved, and his razor would cut nothing. He had thought of missing this Sunday and getting it sharpened during the week, but the master said he would lend him his, and use it later himself. Many difficulties and hindrances occurred to both of the maids, who happened to be on good terms with each other. One could not find her best pocket-handkerchief, and she would almost have enjoyed defying the farmer, but the other advised her not, and promised to lend her her's. There was no sign of their being ready when the mistress was taking leave of John, and giving final directions to Anna-Bäbeli; one could not arrange her chemisette to her mind, and the other was polishing her shoes. Mareili, said the

mistress, tell them that I am going on, and they must come after, and be in church before the bell has stopped, and they are not to rush into church as if they were shot out of a gun.

She walked on in a stately manner, wearing a sprig of rosemary in her bodice, and holding a child by each hand, while her face shone with motherly joy. This was well justified by the appearance of the children; the pretty little John, with a red handkerchief round his neck and a pink in his cap, was delighted to carry his mother's psalm-book, and the blooming little Mareili in a sulphur-coloured hat, wore a beautiful nosegay in her pretty bodice. A quarter of an hour afterwards, the two maids, as red as crabs, hastened along the same road, but the head maid finding she had forgotten the salt bag, sent the under maid back to fetch it, and told her to be very quick, or the mistress would be angry. It occasionally happens thus in the world; the superior does a stupid thing, the underling has to make it good.

In the meantime the master had shaved, and looked round the stable; he stood on the broad balcony of the house, and considered, while filling his pipe, in what way he could best work on the heart of Ulric. But the lecture was not to come off yet. He saw a little Berne wägeli<sup>1</sup> drawn by a fine horse, with handsomely mounted harness, turn off the high road and approach the farm; and he soon recognised his sister and her family on the seats of it. He welcomed his guests with hearty goodwill, though he could not help regretting that his wife was away at church. He helped his sister and the children in the difficult descent from the high carriage, lifting down the little ones in his arms, and urged them all to enter the house. But his brother-in-law would not be satisfied without seeing to the horse; he wanted to know how he was attended to. Also he wished to hear his fine animal admired, and Ulric was not backward in doing so, as he felt more cheerful than he had done for

<sup>1</sup> A light char with double seats, capable practically of conveying all the family, however numerous.



a long time. Ulric well knew his master's design, and was greatly relieved by the happy arrival which had deferred it. Indoors, the farmer directed Anna-Bäbeli to make some coffee, he himself descended to the cellar for cream, cheese, and bread, so that all might be ready to the girl's hand. The little thing did her very best, and wouldn't have lost for an empire the chance of showing her mother and godmother how clever she could be. Aussi,<sup>1</sup> her aunt did not fail to praise her coffee, adding that her Lizbeth could not manage so well, though she was twenty-seven weeks older.

Trini, said the farmer presently, the preaching will not be over for some time, you will do me a favour if you will prepare the dinner. But Trini declined, and said she did not like to meddle with other people's butter-tubs, she did not much like it herself. Whereupon the farmer told Anna-Bäbeli to put more meat in the boiler, and a fine ham, so that all might be ready for her mother to set to work with. Anna-Bäbeli would have liked to go on and do everything, and there is no knowing what she might have undertaken, if her mother had not arrived, in great haste and anxiety. She had seen, from a distance, the wägel standing before the door, and taken a rapid mental review of the situation. There was no time to cook more meat now, her husband would never have thought of it, and Anna-Bäbeli was only a child. She looked into the boiler first thing, and was greatly astonished to see the added meat and ham. When the greetings were over, Trini said, How would you have liked it, Eisi, if I had gone to your butter-tub? John wanted me to get forward with the cooking.

It would have been quite right if you had, said Eisi, but in her heart she was glad she had not, and said to herself, It would not have been pleasant, and John is now and then just as stupid as when I married him; men-folk can never be taught.

The meal occupied a good while, and after chatting

<sup>1</sup> My reasons for adopting in English the French word "aussi" were given in Fors Clavigera.

and grumbling about the maids, who did not return with the salt-bag, they separated to spend the afternoon according to their various tastes.

The children traded in rabbits; John's boy sold a beautiful ash-grey female to his cousin, who was getting out his purse, and paying down three batzen, in great delight at what he believed a good bargain. The mothers came upon this little transaction, and the mistress of the house said they had plenty of rabbits to give, and John ought not to think of taking a kreutzer, had he no manners? The boy was puzzled, and almost tearful; he had done all in good faith, and he had never seen his father give cows and horses. Trini took his part, but Eisi remained firm. At last the matter was happily ended by the promise that they should all shortly visit their aunt, and that a beautiful long-haired rabbit should then be given in exchange to little John.

Trini and Eisi walked together to the plantations; the spring-tails<sup>1</sup> had injured the flax, and the hemp had grown rather unevenly. This was a great trouble to Eisi. Trini congratulated herself inwardly because her sister-in-law's flax had suffered more than her own; she thought the crops had been better when *she* lived there; however, she did not seem to perceive anything amiss, but praised all that she saw. Some fine yellow turnips moved Trini to envy; she said she would pay any money for seed of that kind. When Eisi said she would give her some, thinking to herself she might mix in some other sort, Trini promised her some beans she had certainly never seen the like of—the pods were half a foot long, they were as broad as her thumb, and melted in the mouth like sugar. Eisi thanked her very much, but thought to herself, I must take something off that. She could not understand how Trini could have a kind of bean of which *she* had heard nothing.

In the meantime, John took his brother-in-law into

<sup>1</sup> "Spring-tails" are some kind of vermin.

## 14      Ulric, the Farm Servant

the stable, and they had a talk about the horses ; the visitor praised them certainly, but showed by gesture and remark that he thought himself very knowing, and too good a judge not to see the weak points. Then they passed on to the cows. John told when one would be dry, how much milk another gave, and so on. The brother-in-law, in a careless manner, ascertained all particulars about a fine young black cow, and at last asked her price. John said she was not for sale, and he would not sell her if a certain sum were not offered. The brother-in-law said that was far too much ; she was certainly a fine beast, but he had seen finer, and she would calve at the wrong time for him ; he had two cows which would soon be dry, and if there were a scarcity of milk there would be a disturbance in the house. They bargained down to the difference of a thaler, but neither would give in any farther, so the transaction was closed. However, the brother-in-law bespoke the calf (if it was a cow-calf), and John promised it should not go too dear.

So the afternoon passed, and Trini looked for her husband in order to propose leave-taking.

Eisi urged that it was still early, and they must take something before they went. Then the handsome coffee-pot appeared again, a fine roll of butter, ham, cheese, cakes, beautifully white bread, honeycomb, cherry jam, and sweet wine. Trini threw up her arms, and made great exclamations at the sight of this repast ; said they had had such a good dinner, they wanted nothing ; they would find the difference when they came to them, *she* could not entertain them in this style. Eisi said she must be joking, it was from her she had learned to make such a spread ; when they were with them, they seemed to be eating all day. By degrees, they did honour to the meal, though not without much pressing. When the coffee-pot had given place to the bottle, and some wine had been taken on the score of health, they mounted at last into the waggon, which had been for some time standing ready for them. The seat had to be held for Trini, the children with slices of cake peeping

## An Instruction during the Night 15

out of their pockets had to be packed in; the father seemed as if he must crush them all as he took his place, but the little arms were again visible, and by no means alarmingly still.

When the clearing away was finished, and all was in order in the house, John said, Mother, will you get the lantern ready for us? Ulric and I must stay up with the cow, she will calve before morning. Ulric said Michael's Hans had promised to help him to watch to-night, and if anything was amiss, it would be time enough to wake the master. The farmer said he should decline Hans, Michael would want him in the morning, and he knew by experience what a servant was worth after sitting up all night. Ulric thought his fellow-servant might help him, but this second effort to avoid the master's company was also in vain. John said he intended to be there himself from the beginning, things had gone badly last time.

### CHAPTER III

#### AN INSTRUCTION DURING THE NIGHT

“A just and benignant mastership.”

AFTER they had hung up the lantern in the stable, and given the horses their feed for the night, the master himself bedded the cow, which began to be restless; and then, remarking that she might go for an hour or two, and she would let them know when she wanted them, invited Ulric to come and smoke a pipe with him on the bench outside. It was a warm night in May; few stars were visible; distant voices and the sound of far-off wheels alone disturbed the quiet night.

Have you bethought yourself, Ulric? asked the master.

Ulric answered quietly that there was a good deal to

## 16      Ulric, the Farm Servant

consider ; he could not agree with the master in everything, but he could be satisfied to remain. It is a general principle with the Bernese peasant to affect indifference to the things he has most at heart when the interests of others are adverse to his : and consummate diplomatists might take lessons from him ; but it is a bad principle, and it gives rise to much evil. Coolness and a show of indifference take the place of warmth and kindness ; and as the glow of heaven-born charity communicates itself, and hearts are drawn to each other, so this coldness is also communicated, and a chill of estrangement widens all differences between man and man, so that most deplorable results ensue. Happily, in this case the master understood the matter, and did not take it amiss ; he said it was the same with him, he had nothing against Ulric, but if he remained there, he must change in many respects. He should like to know who was to blame, and if he was not to venture to speak in his own house, when, for days together, he heard no civil word, and saw a face as black as a thunder-cloud.

He could not help it, if he had a cross face, said Ulric ; he had nothing to complain of in the master, or anyone else. But he was only a poor servant lad, he never could be good for much, he had been born into the world to be wretched, and if he tried to forget his misery and have a little pleasure, everyone came down upon him, tried to crush him, and to thrust him into misfortune. He could not look pleasant at that.

But you know I do not thrust you into misfortune, said the master ; on the contrary, I wish you well. But when a young fellow is unsteady and intemperate, he brings himself into misery, and he is himself the cause of his own ruin. You might have learned something by your wretched state of mind all this week ; you have been frightened to death when any woman approached the house lest she should be Anna-Lisi ; and you have made us and our cattle suffer for your inquietude, after the manner of so many servants, who vent all their

## An Instruction during the Night 17

anger on their employers, their cattle, and their tools. Your misery is of your own making, you were not born to it any more than we were. No, Ulric, you must leave off your disorderly ways for your own sake and for mine ; I cannot put up with them any longer.

Ulric said he had done nothing bad.

Oh, said the master, do you think drunkenness is something good? and do you imagine that your visits to Anna-Lisi were very innocent?

There are many worse than I am, replied Ulric, and I know many farmers with whom I should not like to keep company.

That may be, said the master, but tell me, Ulric, does one bad man make another good? and if some farmers are drunkards and rascals, is that any reason why you should become a disorderly sot?

But one must have some enjoyment, said Ulric ; it is not a crime to take a little pleasure.

But what sort of pleasure is it? Can that be called pleasure which brings such misery after it? Certainly you must enjoy yourself, everyone has a right to do so, but it must be in good and permitted ways. It is a sign whether a man is good or bad, whether he takes his pleasure in good or bad things.

You may well talk, master ; you have the length and breadth of a fine farm, well-filled stables, plentiful granaries, the best of wives, thriving children,—you have every chance of enjoyment. If I were in your place I should have no mind for drinking, nor for Anna-Lisi either. But what have I? I am a poor fellow, with no one in the world to care for me ; my father and mother are dead, and my sisters look out for themselves. If I were ill, there would be no home for me to go to ; and if I were to die, I should be laid in the earth like a dog with no one to grieve after me. Why do they not smother children who only come into the world to be miserable?

And the great strong Ulric began to cry bitterly.

No, no, said the master, you are not so badly off as

## 18      Ulric, the Farm Servant

you think. Leave off your wild life, and you may be a fine man yet. Many a one who has had no more than you to begin with, has now house and farm, and stalls full of cattle.

Oh yes! but those things do not happen any longer. Besides, a man must have better luck than I have.

That is a foolish speech, my poor Ulric! How can you talk of luck, when you throw away all the chances which God has given you? If you persist in the conviction that you will never be good for anything, of course you will remain worthless; but if you believe in a better future, you will work for it with hearty good will.

But, for God's sake, master, how am I to become rich? What low wages I have! how many clothes I want! and I have debts besides. What good would it do if I were to be saving with so little, and to allow myself no pleasure?

What! said the master, in debt at your age, in full health, and with no one but yourself to provide for? What is to become of you? you will sink lower and lower, and become a thorough vagabond. But I tell you frankly, it would be a thousand pities, and I am really grieved about you.

That pays off no scores, grumbled Ulric; a poor fellow like me remains a poor fellow.

Look to the cow now, interrupted the master, and when Ulric returned and said they were not needed yet, he continued, I have always remembered our Pastor's explanation of *service*: his instruction was so clear and sensible, that I often think of it—I know that it has had a good influence on the fortunes of many. All men, he said, receive from God two talents, time and strength; of these they must give an account, and their life in this world and the next depends upon the use they make of them. When a man has no employment for his time, nor exercise for his strength, he lends these two talents, for appointed wages, to someone who has more work than his own time and strength can accomplish; this is

## An Instruction during the Night 19

called service. Now through a very false and mistaken idea, most servants regard their position as a misfortune, and look upon their masters as their oppressors, if not their enemies. They aim at doing as little as possible ; they chatter, waste, and sleep away their days, thus cheating the master by depriving him of the time and strength which they have agreed to give him for wages. But as all injustice brings its punishment with it, while injuring the master they injure themselves much more, by forming bad habits, which cannot be easily lost. If a little maid, or a farm lad, continually shirks work, or does it as carelessly as possible, always resenting reproof and taking no interest in daily duty, in course of years this becomes a habit which they take to all masters, and when at last they marry, who has to bear the miserable consequences of this idleness and dishonesty but themselves ? They follow them in want and wretchedness to the grave, and beyond the grave, to the judgment-seat of God. Such habits make many men a burden to themselves and a displeasure to God and man,—visible proofs, to the thoughtful observer, that the unfaithful<sup>1</sup> punish themselves.

And just as a man by his conduct forms his habits, so also he gains a character. Everyone works for this character from the cradle upwards ; each little performance leads on to a reputation for worth or worthlessness amongst men. This character opens or closes hearts to us, makes us sought after or avoided. Even the most insignificant persons are, by their daily habits, forming their characters, and making for themselves a certain reputation, which, in some way or other, becomes known in their neighbourhood. It is in vain for them to blame earlier employers, this does not make good the character,—

<sup>1</sup> Unfaithful to their earthly masters, the Paysan means. The reader may perhaps here complain of the author's dulness, and say he has often heard all this before. If he bethink himself, he will find he has not before heard it so thoroughly, clearly, and firmly said ; and Gotthelf's book is not presented to him as containing new things ; but as containing the things we all have eventually to learn, told in the best way.



## 20      Ulric, the Farm Servant

habit has long formed it. How much depends upon character, and how little it is esteemed by those to whom it is of the most vital importance ! Who will employ a man or maid, who has bad habits and a bad character ? Such an one has no place on earth or in heaven.

Therefore it is plain, said the minister, that those who go into service must not regard it as a slavery, but look upon the master as one who, by the kind providence of God, has work and wages to give them. They should regard the time of service as an opportunity to be used diligently for their own improvement, and the interest of their employers. When the master profits by their industry, they benefit themselves also, and make for themselves a right good name amongst men. If they meet with a bad master, they must not think to punish him by bad performance ; this would injure their own habits, their own characters. But if a servant is faithful and skilful in his work, he acquires a value which no one can take from him, he gains a good reputation, he is gladly trusted and employed ; the world stands open to him, and he will always find people ready to help him, because a good name is the best security.

The pastor spoke of a third point, which applies especially to you, Ulric. He said men wished for pleasure, and it was right and natural that they should have it, especially in their youth. If a man hates service, and does his work against the grain, he seeks enjoyment in something else. He begins to be wild and drunken, and to occupy his mind day and night with the wrong things in which he finds his pleasure. But if men and maids once see that they may improve, and make a good place for themselves in the world by good habits and good character, then they begin to learn to take pleasure rightly. They love their work, and they are always interested in learning how to do things well ; they are pleased if the animals thrive, and the crops are good ; they never say, What does it matter to me ? It is no concern of mine ! Indeed they like to accomplish something unusual, or to undertake something difficult,

so that their best powers are developed. They take pleasure in their master's cows and horses and fields, almost as if they belonged to them. Thus they become honourable men and women, for whom corrupting pleasures has no attractions. They have the best habits, the best characters, the best enjoyments.

This is what our minister said. I fancy I can hear him now, and I have seen a hundred times that he was right. Profit by it, Ulric, and you will be a fine fellow yet.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANOTHER CONVERSATION WITH A GOOD MASTER

“Believe me, the way to deal with your drunken workman is not to lower his wages, but to mend his wits.”

ULRIC'S answer was cut short by the cow. All went well, and she soon after gave birth to a coal-black calf, with a white star on its forehead. Ulric was diligent and attentive; he handled the little calf very gently, and examined its points with special goodwill.

When they had done with the cow, and she had had the onion soup which is usual on such occasions, the day began to dawn, and the conversation was not renewed. There were many claims on the attention of the farmer, and he had to go away that day to transact some business for the commune. There was a tacit understanding that Ulric was to remain, and when John returned in the evening his wife could not sufficiently praise the lad's goodwill, thoughtfulness, and attention to his work.

In Ulric quite new thoughts and feelings began to arise; he reflected on the master's talk, with a growing conviction that he was in the right. It was pleasant to him to think that he might improve himself and his

condition. He perceived that this could not be done by intemperance and dissipation. It was a new idea to him that he might acquire anything in addition to his wages, and that scrupulous faithfulness to his master would advance his own interest also, by forming his habits and character in the right way. Then he recalled instances of farm-servants whose good or bad conduct had produced results which quite justified all that the master had been saying.

Only one thing he could not understand,—it seemed quite impossible for him ever to save money. His wages were thirty crowns, two shirts, and a pair of shoes; he was four crowns in debt, and he had drawn some of his wages in advance. How could he pay debts and save? He must, on the contrary, get deeper and deeper into debt. He needed, at least, ten crowns for outside clothing, without being over-well dressed, and eight more for stockings, shoes, shirts, and washing. Another most necessary<sup>1</sup> piece of expenditure was a little packet of tobacco every week, amounting to two crowns in the course of the year. There were ten crowns remaining, but there were fifty Saturday nights, also fifty Sundays, six of which were regular dancing-days; there were musters, markets, and various other festive occasions. He must reckon two batzen a week for wine and brandy, —who could dream of denying himself anything so indispensable? But that would come to four crowns. After close reflection, he proposed to himself to miss three of the dances, but the others must each cost him at least a crown; he had to pay the fiddler, invite a girl to dance, treat her and himself, and take her home. He counted up and reckoned backwards and forwards, but the result was always the same. He must have clothes, must have his things washed, could not go barefoot. Everything confirmed the mournful fact that he had nothing to save, and too little to spend.

After a few days, the master and man had to drive

<sup>1</sup> The calculation, observe, is wholly Ulric's. See the Paysan's reduction of it below.

some little distance for a cartful of stones, to set a new stove in one of the rooms. As the road was steep and the work had been laborious, the farmer put up at an inn on their way home, called for wine and food, and treated Ulric; this opened his heart and made him communicative during the remainder of the way. He told his master that two days since he had had a ton weight taken off his mind; that he had met Anna-Lisi quite suddenly as he was cutting fresh grass for the cows, and he had started as if he had been bitten by a serpent. She had begun by saying she had not seen him for a fortnight, and she had feared he was ill. He had answered with excuses, said a horse had been sprained—the master had been absent. But she had persisted, and gone so far as to reproach him for his inconstancy, and to urge that he had often said he would marry her. Then he told her roundly that he had said nothing of the sort, and that he had no more to say to her. After that he had continued his work with the greatest satisfaction, and a feeling of intense relief.

This was good news to the master, who thought proper, however, to season his congratulations with very timely exhortations to Ulric to persevere in his wise resolutions.

Master, said Ulric after a pause, I have thought about what your minister said, and he certainly did not talk foolishly, but I am sure he cannot have known anything about the wages of a farm-servant; he was not aware that he has heavy expenses, and that he is not as well paid as a Vicar. But you will understand it better, though you farmers do not know what it is to pay for washing and to have your tailoring and shoemaking done out of the house. I have calculated twenty times a day, till my head has been ready to split, but it always comes to the same, out of nothing comes nothing! He went through each item of his expenditure, thought his reckoning conclusive, and exclaimed at the end, Now, what can you say against that?

The calculation is correct in your way of making it,

## 24      Ulric, the Farm Servant

said the farmer, but one can reckon quite otherwise, my man ! I will show you how I look at it, and we will see what you will say to my way. I will not alter what you have put down for clothes—you might even spend more ; a respectable young man should have plenty of *men*, and not wear the same shirts on Sundays and working days. But two crowns are far too much for tobacco. A man who is moving about amongst hay and straw ought not to smoke until his work is done, and with me you need never smoke to drive away hunger, as they profess to do in some places. *If you would leave off the habit altogether*, it would be a benefit to you in two ways ; *a man who does not smoke is always better paid*.<sup>1</sup>

As to the ten crowns which you reckon for merry-makings of every kind, I cross them through from beginning to end. You do not like that ! You look as surprised as a stork at a new roof ! But if you wish to recover yourself, and make quite a fresh start, you must face the matter bravely, and decide not to waste one kreutzer of your wages. If you merely propose to draw in a little, your efforts will be futile. You might just as well pour oil and water on the fire at the same time ! Old associations will lead you on, and you will again spend two or three weeks' wages amongst your boon companions,—you will lose confidence and self-respect, and sink back into your old life.

But you need not look so scared ; it is nothing so very terrible. Think how many men never enter an inn. Not only poor day-labourers, who have enough to do to earn their bread, but well-to-do people, who have the habit of avoiding useless expenditure. *They* cannot understand how a reasonable man can be content to waste. I once came home early with a little man from Langenthal market. He wondered, he said, to see me going back already, he generally had to return alone. I answered him that I had nothing more to do there, and I had no wish to spend half a day at the inn, wasting my

<sup>1</sup> A wonderful admission, this, from a German author. The joyful Editor enforces it with italics.

time and my money. I think as you do, he said. I began with nothing, and I had to support my parents. Now I am the owner of a house and two cows, and I have also fields and meadows. But I never laid out a kreutzer uselessly, except once at Burgsdorf, when I spent half a batz for a white roll, which I ought to have done without.

I could not say so much, I answered, I have spent many a batz without consideration, but one may carry saving too far. A man must live.

I live, I assure you, said my friend, and happily too! A kreutzer which I save does me more good than a new thaler to one who wastes it. If I had not begun so, I should have come to nothing. A poor young fellow has not the sense to leave off at the right time, if he once begins to squander. But you must not think that I am a miser; many poor creatures who have gone away empty from large farm-houses have been warmed and filled at my fireside. I have not forgotten God who has prospered me, and who will soon call me to appear before Him.

I looked at the man with great respect; no one would have thought from his unpretending exterior that there was so much in him. Before we parted I wanted to pay for a bottle of good wine in return for his good discourse, but he would not have it, he said he required nothing, and it came to the same thing whether it was his money or mine which was spent uselessly. After that, I never saw him again; he has probably given in his account, and if no one had a heavier one than he, it would be well with many.

Look at every kreutzer you spend uselessly as one badly spent. Stay at home, and you will save not only the kreutzer, but much besides. All servants complain how many pairs of shoes and how many clothes they wear, through being out in all weathers, but do you know how they run through the most clothes? By going about at night in snow and wet, to everything that is going on. Of course when clothes are worn day and night, they

cannot last so long. And tell me, how do a man's Sunday clothes look when he has been fighting and tumbling in the mud and rolling in the mire?

No! these habits will grow if they are not promptly checked, and you will soon need twenty crowns, instead of ten, for indulgences which lead to an old age of beggary and disgrace.

And it is not as if you had barely thirty crowns; you have money given you whenever a beast is sold: spend this, when you have to go to an inn, or occasionally to a muster. You have already drawn great part of your wages, but if you will take my advice, you will get out of debt this year; next year you can begin to save. Besides, how do you know that I shall never give you more than thirty crowns? If a servant is diligent and trustworthy, and manages so well in my absence that I need not return to vexation and disorder, I am not careful within a crown or two. Think of it, Ulric! the better the habits, the better the character, the better also the wages.

Ulric raised his head at the end of this speech; at last he said, That would be very fine, but it will scarcely be: I could never persevere in such a life.

Well, try for a month, said the master, and see what it is like. Keep from drinking and dissipation, and all will be well.

## PART II

### CHAPTER I

#### AN ENEMY COMES AND SOWS TARES AMONGST THE WHEAT

“Here is your chief duty, you workmen—to be true to yourselves,  
• and to us who would help you.”

“It is useless to put your heads together, if you can’t put your hearts together.”

ALL went well for many Sundays. Ulric attended public worship and entertained reasonable thoughts of life and duty. After a while he had two new thalers in his pocket, and began to think the master might be about right. In his work he was another man; as he slept at night, rested on Sundays, and lived temperately, his strength was in full vigour, and he seemed incapable of fatigue. The master rejoiced in this improvement, and took care to show his satisfaction by putting Ulric in the way of any little advantage when beasts were sold or bought; he took him with him to fairs and markets, and sent him out now and then to transact business; so Ulric had his pleasure, and the farmer paid all reasonable expenses on the way.

The history of the jealousy of the sons of Jacob is one which is often repeated, especially amongst servants. When one is better than the rest, and therefore preferred by the master, the others hate, persecute, and mock him, and do not rest until they have driven him away, or made him as bad as themselves. It does not suit them for the master to see how much work a good man or maid can do; more will be expected from themselves, and their own behaviour will be more evidently bad, when contrasted with superior manners.

No sooner did the other servants perceive the change



## 28      Ulric, the Farm Servant

in Ulric, than they began to taunt him and to make spiteful remarks. He must be a fool to go out of his way to please the master, *they* would not like to be favourites, and to be spies on their fellow-servants. If they did not work like black slaves every minute of the day, the master knew every moment they rested.<sup>1</sup> This made Ulric cross, for he had never thought of telling tales of the others, and now for fear of seeming on too good terms with the master, he sometimes let himself be led away so far as to make common cause with them. But he felt ill at ease, and recovered himself; for he could not but see that on his master's side there was the greatest kindness of heart, and that he should be wise to take his advice.

Ulric felt as if two powers were contending for his soul; he heard two voices, one of a good, and the other of an evil angel. He remembered what he had once heard in a sermon about our first parents in Paradise. God had spoken to them and forbidden them something for their own good; then the serpent persuaded them to distrust God and question His command. The minister had said that there are two voices which accompany men all through life, and speak to them from the mouths of their fellow-creatures. There are few who are not at some time urged and advised by the good and true, and at another tempted and flattered by the wicked and designing. Which voice is most willingly listened to, and which is most readily believed? Alas! the evil influence too often prevails, and so it was with Ulric.

The neighbours began to observe him; amongst others, a man named Resli, who was unfriendly with Bodenbauer,<sup>2</sup> and ready, in any case, to entice away other people's servants, if he thought they would serve

<sup>1</sup> Meaning that Ulric told him.

<sup>2</sup> "Bodenbauer," literally Ground-peasant or Bottom-peasant,—as Boden See, Bottom-lake, of the lake of Constance. Meaning, I suppose, thorough, or to the bottom—Peasant. I shall henceforward use "Bodenbauer" or "Farmer Boden" as may suit the sentence.

## Tares Sown amongst the Wheat 29

his own turn. Then he would stimulate them, by praise, to undue effort, laughing in his sleeve at their exertions; he would wink at their immorality and lend them money, so that they were bound to him like slaves, and completely in his power.

This man had had his eye on Ulric for a long time; he was handsome, and would be an attraction to the maid-servants; he was a good strong beast of burden, unsteady, and rather simple,—just the one for him to make use of and wear out.

He began by joking him about the way in which he spent his Sundays; he had better be a parson and go to meeting, but there were sly tricks going on there also! Ulric was so vexed that he should look like a parson, that he felt a wild desire to show at once that he was no better than others. What will not youth be ashamed of? not only of being less rich, less handsome, less strong, less finely dressed, but also of being less bad than others.

However, Ulric restrained himself, and as Resli found that mockery did not succeed, he tried another formidable weapon, namely flattery. He began to praise Ulric's strength and activity—he had never seen any one fit to hold a candle to him—he had not had the luck of meeting with such a servant. It was only a pity that Bodenbauer did not think more of him,—he knew how to work him hard enough, and to spare himself. The fact was that the master had in the spring allowed Ulric to sow an acre while he harrowed, and to hold the plough while he led the horses, in order that Ulric might gain skill and experience, remarking that a farm-servant has a much better chance if he understands the whole labour on the land, and if he can do all kinds of work he may one day be head-man.

Very few fathers will trust their sons to sow the seed or to guide the plough; they keep these works in their own hands as long as they have a leg to stand on; and just this kindness of Bodenbauer's was taken amiss. Ulric became more and more set up and conceited; he

thought such a treasure could not be met with every day, and that his master could never get on without him. I should just like to see how they would manage if you were to leave, said Resli, rubbing his hands. They would then know your value, and regret that they had not gone the right way to keep you.

Many servants have been enticed away by this kind of speech; they are flattered by the thought that they are quite out of the common way, that they can never be replaced, and that the master will beg and pray them to remain. So they leave; but no one calls after Benz or Lisi to say they cannot get on without them; they go further each Christmas, everywhere new servants slip into their places, and they are neither missed nor regretted. How true it is that in all positions people like much to believe themselves indispensable, yet do little to render themselves really so!

We must not therefore be very much surprised that Ulric could not resist this pleasing bait. His heart swelled with pride, he thought no more of the two voices, but listened only to the one which flattered his self-love. When the master gave him the chance of perfecting himself in various kinds of labour, he thought him unjust and exacting, and his work became burdensome to him. The crafty Resli had a malicious pleasure in watching the effect of the poison which he had so skilfully administered. The Paysan, on the contrary, perceived with sorrow that a dark cloud had arisen between his servant and himself, and could not comprehend the cause of it, but, true to his habits, he waited for time to reveal the unknown: there was no immediate necessity for speaking to Ulric about it.

## CHAPTER II

HOW THE GAME OF HURNUSS<sup>1</sup> HELPED TO SOBER  
ULRIC

“The fool, whatever his wit, is the man who doesn’t know his master.”

It had long been the custom for a hurnuss-match to be played between the men of Ulric’s parish, Muhliwald, and those of Bronzwyl. As the time approached, both villages were in a state of great excitement, for this was an event of surpassing interest to men and women, to young and old. The hurnuss is a game which is played in the canton of Berne, in spring and autumn, when there is nothing which can be injured in the fields and meadows. Youths and men take part in it, and few games require so much strength and quickness of hand and eye and foot. The players are divided into two parties, one to project the hurnuss, the other to strike it as it flies in the air.

The hurnuss is a little disc, not two inches in diameter, very thin at the edge, and somewhat thicker in the middle. It is placed upright, and slightly fixed with clay on a plank, which rests on the ground at one end, and is propped up at the other by a support a foot and a half high. Some twenty feet from this plank the boundary is marked out; this is from ten to twenty paces broad in front, and widens gradually on each side. There is no back boundary, so that there is often a long chase after the flying disc. The striker hits the hurnuss with a stick, detaching it, and sending it fifty or sixty feet high, and to the distance of seven or eight hundred feet. The opponents with wooden racquets try to strike the hurnuss, so as to divert it from falling inside the boundary. If it fall outside the boundary three times in succession, the

<sup>1</sup> “Hurnuss,” “hornet,” so called from the *whizzing* sound of the disc in the air.

striker must give place to another ; and when all of one side have lost the right to strike again, it is the turn of the other side to project the shining hurnuss.

The dexterity of the skilful players is surprising ; they wheel rapidly round, spring backwards, hit with clear resounding blows. This fine game is a purely national one, and it deserves to be highly esteemed. A distinguished player is famous through a whole district, and the players of different villages have regular matches, after which the losing side treats the other to a supper.

The choice of the players who had to maintain the honour of the village was made with the most scrupulous care, and it was amusing to see how high those who were chosen held their heads, while the others looked small and discomfited. Ulric was one of the former, he was a first-rate hand ; if he sometimes failed in striking the hurnuss from the plank, he was one of the cleverest in catching and hitting it. Farmer Boden advised him to decline. It is not for such as you, he said ; if your side loses, you will have certain expense, and there is sure to be fighting in the evening, which costs no one knows how much. That may do for rich farmers' sons, who like to sport their thalers ; even they are often impoverished for years with fines and compensations, and sometimes banishment ensues.

Ulric could not but see that the master was right, but he felt it hard not to be able to show himself before the crowd of spectators as a chosen hurnuss man. When he went to decline, his answer was, of course, unwillingly received : unfortunately Resli was by, and Ulric was not proof against his representations. He told Ulric that Farmer Boden did not wish to spare him, and to be obliged to fodder the beasts himself ; he had known him from his youth, and he was up to his hypocritical ways of gaining his own ends. He contrived to keep his servants in, and pretended it was for their advantage, just to prevent them from hearing what wages and privileges they might have elsewhere. Now he only wanted Ulric not to get acquainted with the rich young

farmers, and perhaps make his fortune. He ended by advising Ulrich to say that they would not let him off, adding that it would be better his master should grumble a little, than that the whole village should be up in arms against him. Ulrich hesitated, then yielded : such words still found credit with him, and he liked the idea of the company of the rich young farmers ; he did not know that here also the proverb holds good, that it is ill to eat cherries with great lords, because they eat the fruit themselves, and throw the stones and stalks to their companions. Those who associate with superiors must be very wise, or they have to pay dearly for the honour, and they are repulsed with disdain when they cease to be useful or agreeable. This is as accurately true of the men of Muhliwald and Bronzwyl, as of those of Paris and Berne.

When Ulrich told his master that he could not get off playing, John did not say much, but advised him to be well on his guard, he should be sorry if he got into difficulties and lost the ground he had already gained. Ulrich was touched by this gentleness, and felt half inclined to withdraw after all, but false shame was stronger than good impulse, and he pursued his ill-advised course.

The longed-for Sunday dawned at last ; few had been able to sleep during the preceding night, and very few found time to attend public worship. Those who were to take part in the game had their various preparations to make, and the wives had to get dinner ready half an hour earlier than usual.

It was still long before the appointed time when the place of meeting was already filled by men who had arrived one by one, and who were examining the implements, to make sure that all were in perfect order. The boys brandished the sticks and pronounced their opinions on the ground with great seriousness and importance, but the old men stood outside with apparent indifference, smoked their short pipes, held their hands in their pockets, and discussed the weather and the crops.

At last they set forth, with the usual advanced guard

of noisy children. The combatants marched in half military order, looking very proud and defiant, and as if the fate of Europe depended on their prowess. The patriarchs of the two villages followed with a careless air; one would remark to another that he had half a mind to go to his rye, but he supposed he must see how the young men played; another would talk of the feats he had performed when he was young, and wonder whether such and such a player could match those.

As soon as the men were out of the village, the women began to think how they could view the contest even from a distance. It did not suit their ideas of propriety to go expressly to look on, but various pretexts were quickly found. The little girls went out in long lines, hand in hand, and were soon welcomed by parties of little boys. Some older girls went slowly round the circle, before taking up their position on a little hill which commanded an extensive view.

At last the women set out, one by one, each with her sprig of rosemary, and holding a child by the hand, assuring everyone that she must needs go, though it were against her will, the child would not let her have any peace; he had set his little heart on seeing his father strike the hurnuss.

It was a lovely autumn day, bright and clear; the flocks of sheep lay contentedly basking in sunshine on the green earth, and the cloud-flecks rested quietly also in the blue of the far-off sky.

The two parties met in a wide meadow, and arranged themselves for a sport which is a hundred times finer, and a thousand times more national, than low comedy-acting, which neither exercises the body nor improves the mind, and which too often leads to idleness and dissipation.

They arranged most scrupulously the position of the slanting spar, and fixed the hornet upon it, taking great care that the sun should be behind those who had to hit it, and that no dark background should obscure the course of the disc, but that it might be seen as it was

struck from its perch straight into the air. Sometimes it springs off so quickly that it is not perceived until some one is made painfully aware of it by a severe cut on the head. Therefore some of the party have the special office of watching it, and pointing it out to the rest, which they do in a very animated manner.

It was after two o'clock when all the players were arranged, and the call sounded, "Will you have it?" The answer came, "Ready!" and a striker stepped quickly forward and gave a sounding blow, so that all looked with open-mouthed eagerness, sought the hornet in the air, found it nowhere, heard a second blow, and discovered that the first had been a feint. This time the hornet flew high, fell inside the boundary, and thus made a lawful point.

We do not intend to enter further into detail, or to relate how they quarrelled and disputed about real or supposed cheating, how ready they were to enforce their arguments with their fists, how the older men had to interpose to prevent pitched battles, and how these experienced elders could not refrain from instructing and directing the players from time to time.

It will easily be imagined how the ring of spectators became closer and thicker, how the mothers watched their sons with eager sympathy, how the girls' hearts bounded when their lovers made successful hits, how the little boys of the two villages made sides and fought with sticks until the mothers and sisters separated them; the fathers and brothers not thinking such a little matter worthy of their interference.

The men of Muhliwald lost—only by one point, but still they lost. They would not yield without a vigorous defence; they tried every art and every device to prove that another turn was due to them, and that the other side had failed in one mark, but all in vain. They were very ill-humoured, and thought the decision of fate altogether unjust, as they had evidently been the best players. Next they accused each other of hitting badly, or of missing in the most stupid manner. The fathers



## 36      Ulric, the Farm Servant

went away grumbling ; they had foreseen how it would be ; formerly, it would have been otherwise ; *they* had never been so clumsy. The women and girls went home with weary steps, and said they did not mind their men having lost the game, if nothing worse happened that night, but they were afraid they would not part without blows. Well, what if they don't ? rejoined an old combatant ; I've had plenty to do in that way myself, and blows *were* blows when I was a lad, and I'm alive yet !

Ulric had done his part bravely, but a farmer's son, who had himself more than once carelessly missed the huruss, taunted him as if the game had been lost through his fault. This mortification, and the prospect of having to pay at least twenty or thirty batzen towards the supper, made him cross and angry ; he said he thought he should not be able to go with them, he was obliged to return home to fodder the cattle, as the master might be out. Some one must pay his share, and he would give it to him afterwards. But they said they were not going to let him off like that ; he had helped to play, and he must help to pay, and stay with the others, come what might. It would be droll indeed if one were to slink away in that manner ! Ulric was obliged to go with them, dissatisfied with himself and with everybody else : he had thought to make merry at other people's expense ; now the tables were turned.

It must be confessed that it was a serious ordeal for the men of Muhliwald to be led by their conquerors in triumph to the inn, and to meet the exultant glances of the women and girls of Bronzwyl. They submitted, however, with as defiant an air as they could assume, and they paid out the girls with rude speeches for their mischievous looks and mocking words.

When they reached the inn and refreshed themselves by draughts of wine, the excitement and irritation increased. Reproaches were freely exchanged, and many a fist was raised ; however, all were kept within bounds as long as the elders interfered and advised the young men not to begin a fight. But, by degrees, the

wine told on them also—they boasted of their own past experiences ; they had given such blows in their time that there had been streams of blood in the streets, and the neighbours had rushed out to look on, as if an alarm-bell had rung. Then the men of Muhliwald brought up to the men of Bronzwyl how often they had beaten them at hurnuss, and given them a good thrashing into the bargain. The men of Bronzwyl asked who had won that day, and remarked that if *they* had lost they would not crow so loud.

The older men now took fire, and some scuffling began ; here and there a pair grappled with each other, while some powerful men remained quietly beside their bottles, saying a few words from time to time with dignified gravity. These were the proved heroes of bygone times ; it was known that if they once stood up it would portend the fall of many, but it was seldom worth their while to exert their strength. They said, I will not have it, let him go, or I will come, and their words seconded the efforts of the innkeeper, who naturally wished for peace on account of his bottles and glasses and chairs and tables. He was a man in general favour, strong and fearless ; he stepped between the combatants, separated them, or put outside the door those who would not be restrained. The sweat stood on his brow, and he had a difficult task to accomplish ; when he had separated some, others grappled with one another ; he called out the more loudly that he was master there, and he would have no fighting : those who wanted to fight must go outside. Consequently, they slipped out one by one, and a confused scuffle ensued ; one would lie in wait for another, and before he was well outside, strike at him with random blows. Those who were inside wondered how they were to get out, but they ended in joining the general row, and the struggling and fighting became more bloody and desperate. All this passed under the quiet stars, which were not bright enough for a man to distinguish friend from foe. One or two returned to the inn, faint and covered with blood.

## 38      Ulric, the Farm Servant

The innkeeper went for water for them, and returned, bleeding himself, with his broken bottle in his hand. He told the old heroes he thought their time was come, things were bad enough now.

The masters of battle drank off their wine, beat out their pipes, raised their giant limbs with great deliberation, and stepped slowly out; they would have gone more quickly if they had been called to take the flies off a horse. They looked round at the groups of prostrate and fighting men, and one shouted with a powerful voice that there had been enough of it; they must leave off, or they would come and part them pretty roughly. As the struggle continued, he took the nearest, and flung him like a cannon ball, through one of the groups, into a hedge on the opposite side. The others did their part, and the wildest fighter struggled in the hands of one of these old heroes like a fish in the hands of a cook. The place of combat was soon emptied, the wounded were raised, their wounds were washed, and they were seen home by the old men. Only two of the Bronzwyl men would not go, and demanded a doctor; this meant staying there at the expense of those who had beaten them, until an arrangement should be made for lawful compensation. The old heroes did not approve of this: in their time they would have thought nothing of such flea-bites; but the men held to it; they were poor, and it was with them a question of money.

Ulric had gone to the inn in a state of great excitement; while there he drank plenty of wine; as he had to pay so much, he thought he might as well have his share; he was also in the fight outside, but as he had no special ill-will towards any of the Bronzwyl men, he dealt out hearty blows all round, received many in return, and went home bruised and bleeding, with his Sunday clothes torn and soiled.

When the veterans interfered, the men of Muhliwald had evidently the advantage, and the two fallen in the lists were both Bronzwyl men. The former, therefore, claimed the victory of the night, and thus consoled

themselves for their defeat at the hurnuss-match. The heroes of Waterloo or Morgarten could not have returned more intoxicated with victory. They went home in a riotous manner, breaking the windows and tearing branches off the trees which came in their way.

The next morning, however, the affair had a different aspect, and they did not feel so very jubilant.

When Ulric awoke, his head was hot and painful ; he could scarcely move his right arm, his best clothes did not present a cheering appearance, and he could have cried at the thought of the bill of the supper. It is all up with me now, he thought. I was quite right, a poor servant-lad can never come to anything ; if he exceeds a little, once in a way, it is all over with him. He was quite discouraged and very ill-humoured, and everyone felt that he was like a loaded cannon, which might go off at any moment.

In the meantime, the wounded men sent to Muhliwald to know if they could arrange amicably, or if they must apply to a magistrate. Resli answered that they must see if they were much hurt ; also that he would consult the rest and give an answer in the morning. Thus the old fox gained time for carrying out a plan which he had already devised. He secretly charged the others to prevail on Ulric to give himself up, and either make an arrangement with them or allow himself to be brought before the magistrate as the offender : thus they would be well out of the scrape themselves, and they would cheat the Bronzwyl men, who would not get much out of Ulric. He was sure Ulric could be got to do it if they gave him good words and fair promises. They must say that they would make it all up to him, and give him a handsome reward besides. They need not hold to more than was convenient.

This was acceptable advice to the interested party, for they were afraid that the magistrates might order, not only fines, but banishment, on this occasion ; and though a rich farmer's son loves money, he will pay it ten times over rather than be banished ; his father would pay a

hundred times as much to keep him, and his mother a thousand !

Resli went to Ulric, as he was foddering the cattle in the evening, and told him the matter looked bad ; the Bronzwylers had sent messengers, and they must see how they could get out of it ; anyway it must cost a good deal of money. That was like the match to the cannon. Ulric told him, in an explosion of wrath, that he was an old villain, who had urged him into misfortune ; he had wanted to draw back, and who had hindered him ? The older men, who should have had more sense ; and he, Resli, was the worst amongst them. He told him it was hard that a poor servant lad should be done out of a whole year's wages ; it was a sin and a shame before God and man !

Resli let him storm away until he was tired, and then assured him that it was just the contrary ; they had his good at heart, and if he would be reasonable, they would arrange so that he should be a gainer by the whole affair. He had difficulty in getting a hearing ; and when he proposed that Ulric should give himself up as the offender, there was a second and more violent explosion. At last Resli managed to make Ulric understand that they would back him, and also give him something handsome for himself ; he should only make his claim, and they would satisfy him. They could manage it more cheaply in this way, and even if he should be brought before the magistrate and be banished, a fine fellow like him would always find a master, and perhaps he would make his fortune in foreign parts, like many others, who would never have gone if they had not been banished. And the fifty or a hundred crowns compensation would come in well for him ; he would have to work a long time before he could get so much. Also, if they could serve him in any other way, he had only to mention it ; they would always stand by him. In short, Resli knew so well how to put the case in an attractive form to Ulric, that he promised to go to a meeting that evening for the purpose of arranging the

affair. Come, then, said Resli, but do not mention it to your master; it is no affair of his, and there is no occasion to tell him anything of it.

Scarcely had this mischievous neighbour gone than Farmer Boden went to Ulric in the stable, and after some indifferent words, said, Has not Resli been here? did he want me? He did not say so, replied Ulric. The master asked what then had he to say to his servant? Ulric said they had been talking about what had happened yesterday. The master had been foddering the cattle close by, and had heard the whole conversation. It was therefore not difficult to him to bring Ulric, by a series of questions, to confess the truth. Farmer Boden, on account of his natural circumspection, had had an inward struggle before he could decide to mix himself up in an affair which would certainly do him no good, and he had hesitated to take up a servant's cause against a neighbour; but goodwill and kindness conquered. He thought it would be cruel to leave the poor lad in the toils of such a designing hypocrite; and he was also piqued that behind his back his servant should be tampered with, misled, and ill-treated. He said, therefore, to Ulric, You may do as you will, as far as I am concerned. You would not listen to me when I tried to persuade you not to join in the hornet-match. But, if you will be advised, do not be taken in; they want to put you forward, and to shelter themselves behind you. They will promise what you will, but they will perform nothing. If you arrange with the Bronzwyl men, you may pay for it; if you are banished, you may go where you will, not one of them will thank you. Believe me, it is so; I have had experience of such things. But that is dreadful, said Ulric; would they not keep their word? How am I to understand people? You good simpleton, said the master, they keep their word when it suits them, or when they are obliged, but no further in such cases; they are the nastiest transactions in the world. When men of that sort can take anyone in, they make merry

over his being such an idiot, and laugh till their sides ache. This vexed Ulric very much, and he said, nearly crying, that he could not believe men were so bad ; if they were, it would be better not to live in such a world.

Ulric, said the master, you must take people as they are, you cannot alter them ; but you may learn to be prudent and sensible, so that they may not be tempted to impose upon you. It is a true and wise saying, " Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." A silly man is a constant temptation to others, who enjoy nothing better than to mislead or deceive him. •

Ulric asked what he had better do now. It might be best, said his master, to stop away altogether ; but go, and be wary ; because they will make you the finest promises, and will swear, and give you every sign of warmth of heart, so that you will think they must be sincere, and it would be foolish to lose such a good chance of advancement for yourself. Then say yes, you agree, but they must give you the matter in writing. Watch the expression of their faces ; they will say it is unnecessary, their promise will be sufficient ; they would be ashamed to say a thing, and not to do it. However, insist on it, and see that all are named and that each is responsible. That would be very good, said Ulric, but I cannot read writing. That does not matter, said the master, bring the paper to me, we can see what is in it, and to-morrow you will still be free to act as you will. But do you not really think that I shall lose anything ? We shall see, said the master ; if you will believe in me this time, and not be mistrustful, I will promise to help you out ; if you would rather believe others, do so, and you will see the result. I told you beforehand the course things would take. • I know well you have heard suspicion cast upon me ; you have been told that I was tyrannical and selfish, and that I grudged my people enjoyment. It was not right of you, Ulric, to believe such things ! You might have known me better, and you really deserve that I should leave you now to get out of your difficulties

as you can. But I say to you plainly, if you are so mistrustful another time, so ready to believe and follow any rascal who chooses to slander me, then we must be parted for ever. I cannot be a father to you, unless you trust me and show towards me the confidence of a son.

Ulric acknowledged that he had acted very wrongly and very foolishly, but said he had not believed that men were like that. What! said the master, not that men were like that! You readily believed that I was a bad master and wished to wear you out for my own advantage, you believed that one who showed his goodwill by his deeds was bad, and that they who spoke to you fair and flattered you were good, though they had never done a hand's turn for you! 'Then you say, like the rest, you could not have believed men were so bad! That is an unreasonable speech. It is you who cannot distinguish good from bad; you have a natural leaning towards those who mislead you, and a natural disinclination towards those who direct you for your good. You are like many others who would rather credit any worthless scamp than the best of masters! Believe me, those who have to manage men and maid-servants have no easy time of it!

The master, contrary to his custom, had spoken warmly. Ulric begged him not to be angry, and assured him that if it were really as he had said, he would have full confidence in him, and put no more trust in those rascals.

Ulric went to Farmer Boden quite early in the morning and told him he thought he must be a magician; all had happened so exactly as he said it would. They had almost eaten him up with love and kindness, now and then one had tried to frighten him, and at last they had promised him five hundred gulden. He had agreed, and asked for the promise in writing. They had argued with him, saying this was quite unnecessary; then Resli had said they might as well give it to him, he should write it himself, if he was so deter-



mined to have it. He had said he could not write ; Resli had then drawn it up, and two had signed in the name of all. They had given him the paper with him, but charged him not to show it to anyone, or it might spoil all, but they had exchanged meaning glances, and each had a queer expression of face as he read it. .

Well ! would you like to hear it ? said the farmer. And he read,

“Last Sunday there was ill-will at the hornet-match, followed by hard fighting. Farmer Boden’s servant confesses that he alone is responsible for the hurts received. This is vouched for, and witnessed to, for themselves and each other, by the undersigned,

JOHN FURFUSS,  
BENEDICT HEMMLISCHILT.”

Ulric turned first red and then pale, doubled up his fists and shouted, The rascals ! the rascals !

Now, said John, who is to be believed ?

Stop, master ! said Ulric, Resli shall be paid out. I will break every bone of his body !

That would do a great deal of good ! you would fall out of the frying-pan into the fire.

But what *shall* I do ? said Ulric, I cannot take it quietly.

Go to your work and leave the paper with me. I will manage it ; it is best to make no noise about it ; it could do no good to either side ; it would only be food for the vultures who devour their neighbour’s reputation.

When the master had calmly breakfasted, he strolled into Resli’s farm, and found him picking up fallen apples ; he congratulated him on the number and fruitfulness of his trees. He went on a few steps, then returned and said, By the bye, I must not forget to tell you that Ulric has changed his mind, the paper you have drawn up does not suit him. Resli bent towards the apples, and said, He must please himself, but he had better mind what he is about. O yes ! said his master,

## The Growth of the Good Seed 45

I only wish to warn you to leave him alone ; it will be better for you to arrange amongst yourselves, and not ask one kreutzer of Ulric, than that he should show that paper to the magistrate. To this Resli made no answer, but said, John, I should be glad if you would keep your hedge in better order, your sheep are always in my orchard, and if one of them is choked by an apple, it will not be my fault.

The gaps shall be mended to-day, said John, and they would have been mended before, if we had had time ; you must not take it amiss. No, said Resli, but it seems to me that the hedge has been out of order a very long while. Yes, it may be so, said John, but you know, Resli, if there had not been this hurnuss business, many good things would have been done, which have been left undone, and many discreditable things would not have been attempted.

The tobacco got into Resli's windpipe, and made him cough. John returned home, and told Ulric that he would have nothing to pay.

### CHAPTER III

#### HOW THE MASTER FOSTERS THE GROWTH OF THE GOOD SEED

“The first duty of every man in the world is to find his true master, and, for his own good, submit to him ; and to find his true inferior, and, for that inferior's good, conquer him.”

So Ulric had a great escape. It is true that he regretted the money he had lost and the clothes he had destroyed, but he had gained experience as to who were his friends and who were his enemies. He now understood that those who tempt others into the broad way are moved by an evil spirit, and that they are of God who invite others into that narrow path which is so hard in the beginning, and so glorious in the end. He therefore did

## 46      Ulric, the Farm Servant

not lose heart, but continued to work and to save ; he exercised self-control and self-denial, and did not rest until he had made up what he had lost. It is well when this is the case, as nothing is more discouraging than having to begin again at the beginning. Most men, when they have given back a time or two in the attempt to ascend a mountain rapidly, abandon the effort altogether. If horses begin to draw a waggon and fail, through the unskilfulness of their driver, they pull less and less each time, and then do not try. It is so with all progress and change for the better, and especially with the effort to save money.

Ulric kept his ground, however, notwithstanding many temptations. In the dark evenings and during the winter Sundays, when he did not know what to do with himself, he felt strongly inclined to go to one of those places of resort for young men where they begin to play innocently for nuts, but go on to play for brandy, and end in guilty excess.

Many farmers have no warm room to which the men-servants are made welcome, and where they are allowed to employ themselves comfortably and profitably ; they have, in consequence, to thank themselves for many bad servants. The sleeping rooms at the top of the house are cold and dark, and very scantily furnished, and the men-servants are not generally allowed in the living room with the family. They go into it when they are called to a meal, and they are expected to go out when they have done. If they remain, the mistress looks askance at them, or she asks the master to tell them their tobacco is too strong, or else they are simply told *that* is not their place, they must go elsewhere. It is a little better for the maids ; if there are not apples or potatoes to prepare for the next day, they spin with the mistress in the evenings. But on Sunday afternoons they are glad, in many places, to be rid of them also, and many a farmer's wife has urged a girl to be off, remarking that when *she* was young nothing could ever keep her at home on a Sunday !

## The Growth of the Good Seed 47

Any reasonable person may understand how brutalized men must become, who, through the whole year, have no culture of their higher nature, who are banished to the stable, or to the company of those who, like themselves, have no chance of spending a quiet hour in reading or writing, in a warm and lighted room. Such men lose all taste and desire for anything which can instruct and improve the mind and heart; here and there they play harmless games, but they generally sink to the lowest pleasures and the most brutal sensuality. Even those who do not regard Sunday as the Lord's Day, would shudder to see all the immorality of the serving class in these unoccupied hours. Many otherwise sensible persons are never weary of deploring the wickedness of servants, their folly and their stupidity; yet they banish them to holes which they would think unfit for their favourite dogs. If one remarks to them that those who live like cattle cannot be much better than cattle, they say they cannot arrange otherwise, the house-rents are too high, or the wood for a sitting-room fire is too expensive. Be it so; but then they must put up with such servants as they themselves help to make.

This bad state of things is increasingly prevalent in towns also. The houses are large and showy, but the servant-accommodation is poor and scanty; there is no longer the little sitting-room where serving-men and maids can find a free place at a table, books, especially the Bible, and writing materials. Those who are not treated with humanity become less and less human; the evil brings its own punishment, and who can wonder that such householders never have good servants?

One Sunday the master saw Ulric standing under the eaves of the roof, in a state of painful indecision, as if he could neither make up his mind to stay in or to go out. He said to him at last, What is the matter? Are you nailed there so that you cannot move? No, master, said Ulric, but I am almost pulled in two; something draws me out, and something else holds me back, and neither gets the master of the other, so that I am spell-bound.

## 48      Ulric, the Farm Servant

I wish somebody would help me either in or out ! I am so cold that I can scarcely feel my feet. The master laughed and said he must explain this to him ; it was a queer thing.

Oh ! master, said Ulric, I am dreadfully dull, and I do not know what to do with myself. I thought I should like to go into company a little, but I only know of one place, and I know how things go there, and the state I might come home in—then I thought I had better stay here. But what can I do ? I cannot go to bed, and I should be no better off in the stable, and round about the house the wind blows enough to take the buttons off one's clothes ! Master, what shall I do ?

You are a foolish fellow, said the master ; can you not go into the great room ? There the stove is warm, the wind does not blow, and if you were to read a chapter in the Bible it would not hurt you. Yes, said Ulric, but I was not sure that I was quite in place there. I tried it once, and I seemed to be in everyone's way !

That would be a joke, said the master ; if it is right for me it must be right for others ; come in ! Ulric followed with some hesitation, and he moved about as if he was paying a visit of ceremony and scarcely knew where to sit. He placed himself at last at the lower end of the table, and the master gave him a Bible, and showed him some other books upon the cupboard, which he might read if he liked. Ulric began to read, but it was soon evident that the maid-servants did not want him there ; one wished to place a bowl of water just where he had the Bible, and, after he had moved, another wanted to iron a habit-shirt exactly where he was ; when he went still further off they said his legs were in the way, and they could not get to and from the table conveniently. Then Ulric began to assert himself and to say he had as good a right to be there as they had ; the master himself had invited him in, and there was surely as much room on the table for the Bible as for their finery. The maids said they should like to know what the master had to do with it ; they had had the

## The Growth of the Good Seed 49

table to themselves ever since they came. It would be droll if the master were to introduce new customs, and they were to have the smell of stable-clothes all the afternoon: it was quite enough to have it at meals. The master could not order anything of the kind! Ulric said he thought the master had quite as much to do with it as his own serving-maids, and he knew that his clothes did not smell of the stable like those of some others which they did not object to!

At the sound of high words the mistress came out of the little parlour, and said she had no chance of taking up a book on work-a-days, and she ought to have a quiet time on Sundays, so that she might read a chapter of the Bible in peace. When she was settled for this duty she was disturbed by their quarrelling; formerly servants had known what manners were! Pardon me, said Ulric, who well understood the hint, I should not have come in if the master had not invited me, but I can go again. Oh, stay, Ulric, said the wife, when she had heard about the master, I did not tell you to go, but you can be quiet together; when I want a little reading, I cannot do with quarrelling.

The strife ceased, but Ulric was not very much at his ease, and he was glad when it was time to go and fodder the horses.

Then the master, who had been for a walk, came in, and asked him how he had spent his afternoon. Pretty well, said Ulric, the Bible was pleasanter reading than he expected, but he did not rightly know, only it seemed to him he ought not to be in the great room. Did anyone tell you to go out? asked the master. Oh no, not exactly, said Ulric, but I could feel it without that.

John did not inquire further. When he went in his wife said she would like to ask him, only he must not take it amiss, why he took it into his head to allow men-servants in the great room on Sunday afternoon; they had never done so; where could they go themselves if any visitors came? They could not talk before a roomful of servants. In summer they could go into the

parlour, but in winter it was too cold, and the front room was much brighter because of its sunny aspect.

John listened seriously, and then said, Now, wife, hear what I have to say, and do not take it amiss either. I will tell you what I did; during my walk I have considered the subject, and it seems much more important than I thought it at first. Then he related how he had happened to see Ulric and invite him in, out of pity, that he might warm himself; how he then realised, for the first time, the hard case of a farm-servant who is driven into bad company because he has nowhere to go. He cannot take up a book or write a letter; he forgets all that he learned at school; and when, in later life, he wants to undertake any little business, or has children of his own, he can scarcely read print, much less writing. He has no wholesome exercise of the mind, and he forgets that he is a reasonable creature. Besides, he added, I have often noticed that when men-servants go out they come back with their heads turned, and they set themselves up in opposition and are as provoking as possible. So I have been thinking if we could keep them at home, without any constraint or obligation, and if they learned to be more sensible and to consider their own true interest, how happy it would be for them and for us!

Oh, John, said his wife, do stop and take breath; you are like our preacher, who talks too much by half. I do not like to begin a new fashion; and where are *we* to be? Are we to have no quiet corner to ourselves for a confidential word which we have no time for in the week?

John thought they had always the little parlour, or they might warm the back room on Sundays.

But what would people say, said his wife, if we were to begin a new fashion?

Oh, child, said John, if you mind what people say you will do little, new or old. Do what you will, you cannot escape people's tongues; and it is with them as with dogs, they come off the worst who are the most afraid of them.

## The Growth of the Good Seed 51

But, John, do you not think of your children? They would be always with the servants, and you know well how much harm they would learn. God forgive me, it is just as if the devil urged them to say the most wicked things before them!

But, wife, said John, you cannot avoid the children being with them; if they do not find them indoors, they follow them to the stable. You cannot always keep them in; just now I found two of them with Ulric. Now, they will certainly learn less harm in the great room in our hearing, and if the servants employ themselves sensibly. I would rather the children were with them than outside in the road, for they generally come in as if they had been pulled through thorn hedges or rolled in the mud.

The wife, though she had still a great deal to say, gave in at last, and John introduced the new custom that his servants should have a warm, light place to sit in on Sunday afternoons and on leisure evenings. Still, it was rather a shock to her when two lights became necessary. When she saw John light a second lamp just for the servants to read the almanac, it almost took away her breath. In many houses they had to go to bed without a light, and now John gave them one just for their amusement! It seemed as if he had not common-sense! However, she became accustomed to it, and the longer it was done, the better she liked it, until it gave her actual pleasure.

The servants soon learned that there was always a place for them on Sunday afternoons; they sat by the stove, or more generally, at the table: one read, another practised himself in writing or in reckoning; they helped each other, or agreed to refer a difficulty to the master. Sometimes, if they came to a hard word, one of the little boys must ask the teacher the meaning of it the next day. The children took part in all, and were highly delighted if they could teach anything to a grown-up man, or if it was remarked, Johnnie is so clever, there will soon be nothing more for the schoolmaster to teach him! And



pleasure was not the only result ; the farmer's wife was obliged to admit that the children had never learned so much in any previous winter ; also that she had very little trouble with them, and she always knew where they were.

The servants also changed for the better ; they quarrelled less, and they were more satisfactory in every way. They had now something good to think of ; they were not always cherishing imaginary grievances, turning over slanders in their minds, or dwelling on evil pleasures and low desires. Better thoughts and feelings began to grow up in their hearts, and just as hunger returns with bodily health so they began to hunger and thirst after God's truth and God's worship. They went sometimes to a preaching or a catechising, and on their return knew how to relate, not only what they had seen, but what they had heard, and to tell the text and subject of the discourse. They talked seriously at table, and whoever wished to turn such matters into jest, was immediately checked by the others.

The Sunday afternoons passed quickly to all, and when it struck four o'clock, no one, not even the mistress, could believe that it was so late. It even occurred to her to make coffee sometimes for the assembled party, without once thinking how people would talk if she provided it for men and maids at an unusual hour !

It was not long before it was known in the neighbourhood that Farmer Boden had his men and maids in the pleasant living-room on Sunday afternoons, and abuses crept in which would soon have spoiled all. Young men made excuses to go and see the girls, maid-servants strayed in ; it became a meeting-place and a scene of idleness and disorder. The farmer could not allow this, and though a peasant dislikes nothing more than giving to the servants of others a reproof which is sure to be taken amiss, John had to do it this time. He said he did not wish to forbid his house to anyone, but he could not have it a place of general meeting, and that those

## Surrounded by Speculators 53

who did not wish to conduct themselves properly, must go elsewhere. A few words were sufficient. Some of the men looked impudent, and some of the maids tossed their heads, but that did not much signify to Farmer Boden.

### CHAPTER IV

AS SOON AS A MAN HAS<sup>9</sup> MONEY, HE IS SURROUNDED  
BY SPECULATORS

“Avarice is a quite natural passion, and, within due limits, healthy. The addition of coin to coin, and of cipher to cipher, is a quite proper pleasure of human life, under due rule.”

DURING the whole winter Ulric spent so little money, and wore out so few clothes, that he was quite astonished. He had been only once inside an inn, and then the master had sent him and treated him, so that he might not quite forget what it was like. For the first time in his life he quitted an inn after a very small reckoning, and in full possession of his senses; he told the master, as they returned together, that he had not believed such a thing was possible.

This experience raised him very much in his own eyes, and as he went home, conversing sensibly with the farmer, the thought crossed his mind that perhaps he might one day go out of an inn as a master. He dreamt the whole night of farms, and of sacks of money to buy them with. Sometimes he tottered under their weight, and sometimes he could not find them at all. Then a beautiful maiden beckoned to him, and he could not move to follow her; his shoes dropped off, or his legs were tied together. At last the maiden disappeared, and an old woman with a besom drove him out of a hemp plantation; he wanted to run away and could not, and he awoke himself by crying out. This dream took great hold of his mind, and if he had not been ashamed he would have gone to

a fortune-teller to have it explained to him. It was singular that after a good night's rest, and a good breakfast, he always thought the dream meant something wonderfully good ; but when he was tired and hungry no one could have persuaded him that it did not mean ruin and misfortune !

In the meantime things went well with him, he worked as diligently at his master's business as if it had been his own, and felt that he was becoming quite another man by the habitual exercise of faithfulness and industry. He recalled the time when he thought it a shame to be a good, true servant, and a glory to outwit the master, to eat too much and to work too little.

He now made it a point of honour not to draw any of his wages before the end of the year ; he was convinced that a man ought to limit his expenditure to the wages he had received, because future earnings belong to the future. He knew also that the future is uncertain, and that health may fail, so that it is wise and right to lay by for the days of which a man says, I have no pleasure in them.

It was a proud moment for Ulric when, on Christmas Day, his master called him into the little parlour, counted out his thirty crowns, and laid beside them a new thaler as a gift. The strong fellow's hand trembled when he stretched it out, because he had never before had so much money at once ; and the tears came into his eyes when the master praised him, and told him he would make a fine man if he persevered in right ways.

The next thing with Ulric was what he should do with his money ; he wanted clothes, especially shirts, but he could put aside a third, if not half, of his wages. He said he could not have believed how far thirty crowns would go with proper management ; he had never thought money would hold together in this way, it used to be done directly, like a cartful of bought hay, but this was like a good store laid in at home !. The farmer laughed at his expansiveness, but the wife was touched by it, and said when the sempstress came she would have a shirt

made for him for a Christmas present. Ulric thought the master had done too much for him already, and that he ought rather to be paid an apprentice's fee for all that he had taught him. But if he might ask a favour, would she be so good as to buy him linen for three more shirts? He had better get a little stock and not always be putting his hand in his pocket; he did not understand linen, and was always taken in: not long since he had had shirts which were like cobwebs. The farmer's wife said she would do her best for him, but she was not sure she should succeed, weavers and traders were almost too cunning for her nowadays.

Perhaps she had some herself, said Ulric, and would sell him the quantity he required. Yes, I could, but I will not, said the mistress. I have always had vexation when I have done so. Servants are the best customers to the pedlars, who sell them things which no sensible person will buy. If a farmer's wife sells a servant anything, it is a signal to pedlars, tailors, and sempstresses to alight like sparrows on a field of millet, and say they could have bought it cheaper elsewhere, and if she had been able to use it, she would not have parted with it. Such people regard transactions with servants as their own exclusive privilege, and they do not mind what they say to make them suspect their employers. The tailor says the cloth will not hold the stitches, the sempstress says the linen comes into holes under her fingers, and they exclaim that it is too bad to give poor wages to begin with, and then to take good money for worthless articles. I know, indeed, there are master people who deceive their servants, and take off from their hard-earned wages, but there are few of that kind. So, Ulric, I will use our linen for ourselves, and see if I can buy some as good for you, so that no pedlar can grumble, and no tailor can be suspicious.

Ulric often contemplated his treasure, and had great delight in it. It was an attraction to others also, like a honey-pot to wasps. Those who love money, without the trouble of earning it, have an eye on a young man in

his circumstances. One wants to borrow a batz for a packet of tobacco, and another, five batzen, because he does not happen to have any change by him. Hans might get a watch almost for nothing, but he is just one thaler short; one of the maids wants to buy a splendid blue handkerchief from a man from Aargau, who, having slipped into the house, passes off his cotton wares as silk. Ulric must lend her thirteen batzen, because she does not like to ask the mistress. The shoemaker, who is at work in the house, is in absolute need of four crowns, and vows to return them at Easter, with a fifth crown as interest. The flax-hechler,<sup>1</sup> who soon came on his rounds, wanted four large thalers: he was making a good investment in flax, and Ulric should share the profit. This pleased Ulric mightily; he had visions of glittering gold. He thought it would be foolish to have his money in a chest, while he could make such good use of it. These investments, he thought, were much better than little loans of one or two batzen, which would bear no interest. Now he could say he had no more money, he had lent it all! it was quite a weight off his shoulders. But he thought the master need not know about it, perhaps he would have liked the investment for himself. He had confidence in the farmer, but there was this little remnant of the old mistrust; and very few servants like to tell their masters what money they have, or to confess what they do with it.

Easter came, and the shoemaker brought—no money, but a good excuse. He had a large custom and had to lay out a great deal for material, but he would pay interest according to the time. Ulric tried to reckon how much a week he would have to give him, but with all his efforts he could make nothing of it. Michaelmas came, and he had not seen his four crowns again.

The flax-hechler was also unfortunate; flax had gone down instead of up, so he thought it better to keep back half of what he had until he could sell it more profitably; the other half he had delivered on credit to a pedlar,

<sup>1</sup> Flax-hechler, one who heckles or combs flax.

whose name he had forgotten. He had taken great pains to find him again at fairs and markets, but always, so far, without success.

Ulric became very uneasy ; he would gladly have given up the interest, if only he could have got hold of his money again. As often as he asked for it they tried to put him off with new excuses, and when he became angry, they said they would give it to him if they had it ; they could not strike it out of the stones all in a minute. If he saw any way of taking it, he must take it by all means. If they had known how impatient he was, they would not have had anything to do with him.

The thought of losing so lightly his hard-earned money, without anything to show for it, vexed and tormented Ulric so much, that he could neither eat nor sleep. Formerly, when he drank away his money, he at least knew what he was doing ; now that he had saved and economised he was worse off than ever. It was ordained that he should be unfortunate. Now he knew the meaning of his dream, and the sack of money which he could never find again !

The master could not understand what was the matter with him. At last he thought he must be ill ; he could see no other cause for his strange behaviour. However, he waited awhile ; then, finding that there was no improvement, he asked Ulric what was the matter. At first Ulric said he was afraid to tell him. The master replied, he might be silent if he chose, but he thought he had deserved his confidence ; so Ulric told him his trouble, related how his savings were scattered to the winds, how his rejoicing had changed to despair, and how he feared that he should never recover one kreutzer.

You should have thought before acting, said the master. Many servants do not know how to manage their money, and they get cheated in this way. I do not meddle unless I am asked. They would only think I had some interested motive, or that I liked to rule and order. I am sorry for you, but you really might have known what sort of birds you had to deal with in the shoemaker and

## 58      Ulric, the Farm Servant

the flax-hechler. But I will tell you how it was, Ulric ; the demon of avarice tempted you. Do you know, the shoemaker promised not less than a hundred per cent., while honest people generally give only four ? and the flax-hechler also threw dust in your eyes. Simple people are caught in this way, but they might know that when people make such great promises, they do not mean to keep them.

Ulric said he saw that very well now, but he would like to know if the master could help him to his money again, *he* saw no way of getting it. John shook his head, but undertook the commission, and in the end recovered more than might have been expected, as neither shoemaker nor flax-hechler cared to lose his custom.

When he was giving the money to Ulric he said, You keep it, master : I do not want it, and if I had it, I should not keep it long. I am unlucky with money ; either I spend it, or some one takes me in, and if no one were to get it I believe the mice would eat it.

No, said the farmer, I have enough to do to take care of my own, though it is not much. You must put it into the savings-bank. What is that ? asked Ulric. The bank is a place where you may lay by money until you require it, and in time you get a reasonable interest ; and it is so safe that you have nothing to fear. That is very convenient, said Ulric, but can one put in at any time, and is it not known who has money there ? You can put it in and take it out at your pleasure. And for my part, I do not think it hurts a young man for it to be known that he has money at interest ; on the contrary, I think it gains for him a certain amount of consideration. Then there is no occasion to take any trouble about the interest ; it is added each year at the rate of four per cent. So you may double your capital in twenty years. This is by far the best place for money ; you can put in as little as you like, at any time ; you are safe from swindlers and cheats, and you can truthfully tell those who wish to borrow, that you have no money by you. Then Ulric reproached the master for not telling him this before ;

## Ulric Rises in Importance 59

if he had known it, he might have avoided all this trouble.

I repeat to you, the master said, that I cannot treat you as a child unless you absolutely desire it; then you must have confidence in me, and be quite open about everything, and ask advice, as a son would of a father.

Ulric acknowledged himself in fault, and begged the master to put his fifteen thalers into the savings-bank, remarking that though they would be safe they would not bear much interest. That is how you look at it, is it? said the farmer. It is just this impatience which is the ruin of many. Those who find the right way too slow, become spendthrifts or rogues. Wait only a few years, keep adding to your savings, and you will see what a nice little capital you will have.

### CHAPTER V

#### ULRIC RISES IN IMPORTANCE, ESPECIALLY IN THE EYES OF SERVANT-MAIDS

“Protective watchfulness of his master’s interest and credit, or joyful readiness to seize unexpected and irregular occasions of help.”

“The lower grotesqueness of peasant nature.”

ULRIC continued to follow his master’s advice, and became more and more clever and industrious. He increased in wisdom and understanding, and in favour with God and man. The change in his habits was quite perceptible in his appearance: he held up his head like a man, and it was evident that he was no mean fellow. He was often taken for a farmer’s son, not only on account of his good clothes and his silver watch and chain, but because of his good bearing and sensible behaviour. The farmers were glad of a talk with him, and often asked his opinion. He did not give it carelessly: the feeling that he was looked upon as a



responsible person made him weigh his words. People quoted them with the remark, Farmer Boden's Ulric said so, therefore we may depend upon it.

He felt himself no longer a poor servant-lad who was not wanted anywhere; he had a place in the world, and he was worth something to others, who looked upon him with due favour.

All this came to pass gradually, and it would be tedious to relate the separate causes of the happy result. He discovered faults in the horses which his master wished to buy; he made use of favourable weather during his absence; he considered his interest so as to save him from loss in many ways. He also began to feel that a man who possesses something of his own, looks at things with quite different eyes; he knows the value of property, and satisfies his employers by his careful use of all that is entrusted to him. A man who has savings feels a certain assurance (which often, unfortunately, degenerates into silly pride); he has earned a provision for future years; he can look forward without fear; he is no longer the sport of every wind of fortune, or absolutely dependent on the will of others. He can bear a few weeks of illness, or wait for a while for a suitable place, and he does not move about as if he were in a wasps' nest; because peace of mind, and honest satisfaction in daily life and effort, give him a cheerful temper, which is pleasantly felt by all about him.

But this respectable position brings its own peculiar difficulties, just as each flower has its insect, and each fruit its grub. The reputation of being a saving man is an attractive bait to girls who wish to be well settled in life.

The farmer had two women-servants, the upper and under-maid. The first was peevish, and did not give three good words in a year; she was marked with small-pox, had hairy warts on her face, red eyes, and white lips; she was, in short, exceedingly ugly to look at. On the other hand, she was managing and industrious, and a steady husband would be quite to her mind; only she

showed her affection by grumbling and growling, and the more she liked anyone, the more snappish and disagreeable she became. She said it would be worth her while to work and to save when she had a husband; she should see that no one could surpass her in frugality and thrift.

The other was a slight, silly girl, with a pink and white complexion, a pretty little mouth, and sparkling eyes. She liked to deck herself out, was not fond of work, had no idea of management, and only wished for an easy life. A husband represented to her happiness, fortune, and all that the world could bestow. She was all sweetness and smiles; she knew well how to make herself agreeable and caressing, like a cat in a good humour. She thought if she once had a husband, she would love him dearly, and all would be well. Nothing should induce her to remain in service; she would cook what she liked, and do as she pleased.

Each turned her eyes towards Ulric and wished to make him happy. He pleased both; the first thought she would like to help him to save, the second that his earnings would enable her to live in idleness and gratify her fancies.

Stini scolded Ulric for wasting a sulphur match to light his pipe in the kitchen; he might have taken out a coal, his hands were not too delicate, she supposed; and she snapped at him every time he wanted oil. If he overfilled his lantern, and let a drop run over, she told him he must learn economy in a different fashion! His leather shoes might stand a week in the kitchen before Stini would clean them. She hoped thus to keep him at home, and she told him wooden shoes were good enough for a farm-servant to tramp about in. When he and others sat resting on the bench before the house, after the labours of the day, Stini would drive them off to bed, and remark to Ulric that it was no wonder he was so lazy in the morning, and good for nothing all the day!

Stini talked of him continually to the mistress, but always

## 62      Ulric, the Farm Servant

to blame and find fault with him : nothing that he did was right. The mistress often replied, Really, Stini, I do not know what you can have against Ulric ; he does no one any harm, he is one of the finest young fellows possible : where would you see a better ?

Ursi set to work very differently ; she flirted and flattered, and put herself forward ; she wanted help from Ulric, or offered him hers ; she made excuses to follow him, she put on her most bewitching looks, she teased him into playing with her : she would steal his pocket-handkerchief, or take a feather out of his hat, or slip nice apples or pears into his pockets. She said even, sometimes, she would like a husband, and she certainly would make him happy ; people had only one lifetime, and it was silly, she thought, to embitter that one with cross words and stingy ways.

Womanly instinct told these two that they were rivals, and they accordingly did their best to put each other out.

Stini raged against the folly of men, who admire any simpleton who happens to have a pretty face ; told Ulric he was just one of that sort, and that no sensible girl would care to take up with him. He was just the one to be caught by a chit like Ursi, and there would be a fine rod in pickle for him ! As for herself, if she had not a delicate complexion which the sun would spoil, she had a good stock of linen, plenty of stockings, and four bodices, two of which were new, and enough of money besides, (if she *did* set up housekeeping with anyone,) for two beds, a couple of cows, and, perhaps, a sheep. That would not be like marrying a girl who thought of nothing but finery and had no notion of economy ! But she thought she should remain single ; long ago she had had opportunities of marrying, but now not one man in a hundred but preferred a simpering doll to a capable wife with a good bit of money !

While she spoke, she looked sour enough to turn the milk.

Ursi was not half so bitter about Stini, but she made spiteful remarks about her clothes and her habits ; said

they did not matter to her as fellow-servant, but as a wife, such ways would be unpleasant; and added that she had good reasons for not eating anything when Stini cooked instead of the mistress.

The two rivals, who abused each other when they were apart, did not spare each other when they were together; and Ulric, wise as he had grown in many ways, could not yet perceive that neither of these women would be a right wife for him, and could not help being flattered and gratified by seeing himself the object of so much consideration. In questions of marriage, most men have their eyes bandaged, even those who are clear-sighted enough on other subjects; and while everyone can predict to them that they will be unhappy as surely as two and two make four, they themselves do not see it until they have taken the irrevocable step. Ulric liked a pretty and pleasant girl better than an ugly, repulsive one, but he was so possessed by the idea of advancing himself, that the prospect of a thrifty wife, with a few hundred crowns, had a strong attraction for him.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly she was very plain, but one gets used to that, and one does not think of it after a while; besides, all men cannot marry beautiful wives, and many would change the most lovely women in the world for the plainest, if they were less expensive and more industrious.

Ulric was the more convinced that it was time to make up his mind, that he was getting old, and if he did not decide soon, he thought no one would marry him. It is true that in these days little boys fancy themselves men, and people get old sooner than they used to do formerly. It would once have been thought imprudent for a man

<sup>1</sup> The reader is by this time, I hope, prepared for the microscopic pains of watching the gradual change in Ulric which is the ostensible subject of the book. Change, not from coarse material to fine, but from a log of nearly dead timber to a healthy young sapling. He never becomes a hero: men who have the make of heroes in them do not care for money in youth—nor marry for it at any time.—J. R.

to marry before he was thirty years of age, but girls now prefer a downy-bearded youth of eighteen or twenty. This gives an idea of the way in which they are accustomed to look at marriage and its responsibilities. Parents who are themselves children are not the most likely to fulfil their important duties.

But if Ulric was anxious to arrive at a decision, the two aspirants were still more so, and each redoubled her efforts to carry off the prize. If he was milking or foddering, if he was in the grass or amongst the manure, he was sure to see the sudden arrival of Stini or Ursi. If it was Stini, Ursi was not far off; and if Ursi had stolen a march in advance, Stini appeared to rise out of the earth; she would neglect everything, and even let the milk boil over, rather than leave any advantage to her rival. They were not sparing of abuse to each other at these meetings, and each threatened that she would complain of the other to the master, because such scandalous conduct ought not to be allowed in any house. The farmer and his wife saw this state of things with a growing dissatisfaction, for the two maid-servants seemed to have lost their senses. Ulric's work was neglected, and they lived in a state of continual forbearance. The mistress thought John ought to speak to Ulric; she had already reprimanded the maids many times, and it had been like pouring oil into the fire: they had become more violent every day, and she thought Stini would lose her senses; she had lately made a loud crying and sobbing, which she had never done before since she had known her. Ursi did not take it so much to heart; she thought if she had not this one, she would get another. Ulric had not confided his difficulties to his master, and John held back, but he considered that he must do something soon; things could not go on in this vexatious manner.

However, an incident occurred which set matters right, without any intervention on his part.

Ulric's situation became embarrassing; his eagerness for marriage began to cool, and he was rather ashamed of the attentions of his two sweethearts.

## Ulric Rises in Importance 65

One evening when he was in the stable foddering the horses, Ursi arrived, asking him with a pitiful air what was the matter, and why he was changed towards her. She was sure Stini was at the bottom of it, but she knew how to pay her out! As she said these words, they heard a strange noise outside, a heavy fall into something liquid, then a struggling and splashing, and smothered cries and groans. Ursi jumped for joy, and said, She is in! she is in! Then she went out quickly, followed by Ulric with his lantern, while the other inhabitants of the house hastened out likewise in alarm! What a sight awaited them! The unhappy Stini, who in her jealous fury had rushed out to the stable in the dark, had fallen into the uncovered manure-pit.

She was in the most pitiful state imaginable; she struggled to get out,—but all in vain; no one offered to help her, no one liked to approach too near. The whole household formed a circle round her, hesitating as to what could be done. No one could help laughing; even the mistress had to turn away, lest she should compromise her dignity by laughing also. The poor creature stretched out her arms convulsively, raged at Ursi—and apparently not without cause—for removing the planks from the manure-pit, on purpose that she might fall in on her way to the fountain, and declared that she should suffer for it! At last the master took pity on her, laid hold of a pole three or four feet long, held it at one end, and gave Ulric the other. Stini took hold of this in the middle, and they drew her up slowly out of the pit, and placed her on firm ground, amid shouts of boisterous mirth. Ursi laughed louder than the rest, but not for long. Stini sprang upon her like a hyena, and dragged her to the ground, and none cared to soil their clothes by attempting a rescue. At last the mistress, at the sound of approaching steps, said she would interpose herself if no one else would. Then the master ordered the two dirty creatures into the house in good earnest, and they had to recover themselves as best they could.

This scene finished their pretensions with Ulric. They

## 66      Ulric, the Farm Servant

felt that it was all over with them; both attacked and abused him, and their hatred promised to be as troublesome as their love. However, Stini consoled herself by the thought that, anyway, Ursi had not caught him, and Ursi thought to herself that a pretty girl can get a husband any day,—not that she would take just anybody!

Ulric still clung to the idea that it was time for him to marry, and that he ought not to delay.

[I have taken great liberties, in this chapter, with my translator's text, for which I ask her pardon, not her permission. As actors nowadays leave out as much of Shakespeare as they don't like,—so I leave out as much of Gotthelf as I don't like. But I put nothing of my own in, in place of it. Readers who are curious to know what I cancel, may learn German, and look.—J. R.]

### CHAPTER VI

#### HOW ULRIC BARGAINS ABOUT A COW AND NEARLY GETS A WIFE

“No right thing can be accomplished—you can't even see your way to it-- unless, first of all, both servant and master are resolved that, come what will of it, they will do each other justice.”

THE farmer sent Ulric to market to sell a cow for a certain sum, telling him that he might keep for himself what she fetched beyond that, but he must take care not to miss selling her, through asking too much, as he had done on similar occasions.

Ulric had taken much interest in the feeding of this cow, and he went to the fair with raised expectations, debating in his mind how much he might add to the reserved price. While he was still at some distance from the town, people passed him, and called out, What do you ask for the cow, young man? They examined her, handled her, said she was too thin, but began to bargain.

## Ulric Bargains about a Cow 67

Then others came, some praised, and others remarked that they might do worse, but added that there were lots of cows cheap.

Purchasers came about him like horse-flies at the entrance of a wood ; they joked him, looked at his cow, and asked him what he had the face to ask for such a lean creature. Ulric began to suspect that cows were scarce, and that he might make a good hit this time. He asked five thalers more than the sum fixed by the master.

This was like throwing a stone into a wasps' nest ; the bargainers made a great outcry, and went away hither and thither, as if quite frightened by such a price. But Ulric observed that some of them kept an eye on him, and noticed the spot in the fair where he placed himself with his cow. He called to an acquaintance to hold her for a moment, and slipped quickly through the market to see how prices were. He saw, to his delight, that he had not been mistaken, he might make something for himself to-day. When he returned he found his substitute quite at a loss, not knowing how to answer the buyers. Immediately he took up the business, he stuck to his demand ; they offered, they bargained, they went away, and yet unwillingly made room for others. Finally, he abated one thaler and concluded the transaction, for fear of losing all purchasers by holding back too long. He delayed only until he had received the money, and the hottest afternoon sun was still burning when he started for home.

He had not proceeded far, when he saw before him the figure of a tall woman, who could not manage four little pigs, which she was trying to drive ; one would straggle to one side and one to another, and while she was making a rush after one, the others would escape. Pigs and driver were puffing and blowing, when Ulric came to the rescue. He recognised the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, who, breathless and exhausted, asked him, for goodness' sake, to help her, or she would never get the little beasts home. Ulric managed them



## 68      Ulric, the Farm Servant

easily ; he had a more quiet and reasonable way with them ; and animals are, as a rule, what their drivers make them. Here an excellent chapter might ensue for parents and rulers, but we have not time to give it them just now.

We must go on to relate that Katie used her recovered breath for Ulric's information, and found a great deal to say about the plenty and prosperity which reigned in her home. She told him how many pigs they had, how they fattened them with cream, how profitable they were, how their flax and hemp were still more so. They planted quantities every year, and they were so industrious in spinning, that they had rooms full of skeins of thread which quite astonished the merchant. Her mother had part of it woven, they had chests full of linen, an outfit for each child, and any amount of table and bed linen. And as to cattle, no one in all the country round had any to be compared to her father's.

That is not all, continued Katie ; I have often stared to see the money the miller has paid him ; he says he does not meet with such corn as ours every day. We have fields and fields of it, all as level as a plate, and such fine black mellow soil. It is a beautiful sight when the corn stands upright, as thick as a brush, all the ears of the same height, as if they had been cut with shears ! People stand still to look at it, and say they do not know how my father manages it, all seasons alike !

So Katie talked away until they arrived at an inn. It was no wonder she stopped for some refreshment, and thought it would do the pigs good to rest and have a drink. She proposed to treat Ulric to a bottle of wine, as she would never have got home without his help. Ulric said he had no objection to some wine, if she did not mind going to an inn with a farm-servant, but he had money and would pay. Katie said he must be joking ; she had been to inns with farmers' sons, who were less respected than he,—her father had praised him many a time, and said he wished he had such a man, and he knew many farmers' sons who would be less acceptable

## Ulric Bargains about a Cow 69

to him as a son-in-law even, than Farmer Boden's Ulric, though he was indeed but a servant !

There were not many people in the inn ; those who want a regular meal and a dance do not go so early. There were only a few small farmers who had sold butter, or thread, goats or pigs—the house-fathers and house-mothers of needy homes, who do not like to delay long, or to take much before they get their poor coffee at home. Some of this class sat in the parlour with their half-pints before them, their baskets or sacks beside them, and talked about the market and the prices. When some regretted having taken butter, because it fetched nothing, it was so plentiful, Katie boasted that her mother had known better than to send hers. Then she said to Ulric she would rather like something to eat, and if he would join her, they might ask the hostess what she could give them. He called her, and she said that if they would have a little patience, they might have roast meat, sausages, and ham, but nothing was off the fire yet, they had not expected people so early. Katie was quite satisfied to wait, on account of the little pigs, (as she said,) and meanwhile it would get cooler. She had ample time for further diffusiveness on the advantages of her home. When the time came for settling the bill, she wished to pay the whole of it, but finally Ulric did so, as she did not wish to change her large coins at the inn. I will repay you when we return, she said. I gave my father all my money, that it might not get mixed in paying for the pigs, but I have plenty at home. I can assure you that many people would be glad to change purses with me ; my mother often says there are few farmers' daughters who have the pocket money that I have. Whenever we sell pigs, I get five batzen on each, and I make a good deal by fetching and carrying.

For instance, I always take the meat to the parsonage ; the former parson-lady used to give me five batzen every time, but this one only gives three, or three and a-half when the quantity is large. I have every year a field of flax all to myself, which has yielded me twenty-five

pounds of thread, but my mother says that is only right, for there are not in the whole canton of Berne a dozen girls whose spinning-wheels go as fast as mine. My father also is very good to me ; if he receives money when I am present, he does not put it away without giving me one or two new thalers—indeed I have known him go as high as a golden louis—saying that it is quite just, because he would have to give forty or fifty thalers to a servant who could turn his hand to everything as I can, and then he could not set him to spin in the winter, like me ! He declares that, if he was young, he should be jealous of my skill in mowing ; but what I understand best is sharpening the scythes ; the men cannot make out how I do it : as soon as I take them in hand, I set them to rights. Then I am always up first in the mornings, and long after the servants are in bed, I set to work in the kitchen and help my mother to wash up, and to prepare the next day's breakfast. She says she wonders how I can stand it.

Last summer, I carried so many sheaves of corn in one morning, that the man who had to load them turned faint, but I was not even tired. And you should have seen how our milker looked, when I milked two cows, while he was milking one ! he said it would be a sad pity if I did not marry a cow-keeper ; anyone who got me for a wife would be lucky, there was not such another in the cantons of Berne or Lucerne. But papa said, with tears in his eyes, that he would not part with me, and that he would rather lose the best cow out of his stable. And then he went into the little parlour and brought out a handful of large thalers for me, and said he would not grudge me a whole apronful if I wanted them. Besides, we have four rich cousins in Aargau ; whenever they come they bring me beautiful dresses and handkerchiefs. They make me presents of money, and there is no knowing how much they may leave us. They only regret that they have not a son, as they would be glad to see me settled amongst them ; but my father would not like me to go so far away, and he says, if I will stay with him

## Ulric Bargains about a Cow 71

until we come in for the property, he will build me a fine house, and I shall live like a lady.

But Katie was not yet quite sure what she should do, she thought so industrious a girl would be dull, even in a grand house, with nothing to do. Also she might find it lonely. If anyone suitable offered, she might choose to marry; she had had many good chances, but she did not look for riches, she wished for some one handsome and kind, and if such an one offered, she would not keep him waiting for an answer. Her parents would not object, and they would prefer a son-in-law who lived with them to the richest husband who wished to take her away. They find that servants are always a trouble, she added, for, of course, they have never found one like you. Upon my word, I wonder how you can remain in service! A strong capable man like you, with money put by, might easily get a wife with means, and set up housekeeping on his own account.

Katie's volubility did not allow Ulric to put in a word; they came to where their ways parted, she thanked him for his help and said, I owe you eight batzen, and as I cannot bear to be in debt, come soon and fetch them. Then, when she and the little pigs had proceeded a few steps, she turned round and added, Come this evening and make sure. Are you in earnest? asked Ulric. Yes, upon my word! she replied.

Ulric did not know whether he stood upon his head or his heels, and a conflict of new ideas arose in his mind. Katie was a match worth thinking about. She was tall, very strong, and her large arms and feet seemed to betoken great power of work. Katie was the daughter of a farmer who owned a good deal of land. She had an immense quantity of money, besides what she would come in for from the Aargau cousins. And Katie was not proud; perhaps she would marry him—it certainly seemed as if he might gather so much!—and he would be a happy man who could secure such a treasure of industry.

He was walking on mechanically when the sight of the

farm-house recalled him from the thoughts of Katie to the remembrance of the golden louis he had gained that day. It occurred to him that the master might regret fixing so low a price, and it might be better not to tell him all, but to speak only of three or four francs of profit for himself. There had been no witness of the sale of the cow, and the purchaser was a stranger. He would thus spare his master vexation; and the money rightly belonged to him before God and man! But, on the other hand, would not this be imposing on the kindness and confidence his master had shown in entrusting the business to him? If he had not wished to benefit him, he would have gone to the fair himself, and so experienced a farmer would have taken advantage of the opportunity at least as cleverly as *he* had done! He had come to no decision when he arrived at the house, and the master knocked for him at the window of the stübli, and beckoned him in there.

He passed into the domestic sanctuary with reverence; he had never entered it except to receive his wages, and on the memorable day of his master's serious reprimand. He seemed to pass the limits of a sacred enclosure, and to be prepared for something which mortal eyes had not yet seen. Here the inner life of the family is cherished in devout retirement, the husband and wife discuss freely the interests of the children, form their resolutions together, communicate their fears and hopes, their joys and sorrows, and compose those differences which are not allowed to disturb the harmony of the family.

How well it would be if there were such a sanctum in many grand houses! But people consider the size of the drawing-room, see if there is room for a chandelier, consult whether the old furniture will do or not; the husband and wife live *in* society, and *for* society. Many a marriage is only a company-piece; the actors are well-dressed, and placed in a handsomely furnished drawing-room, their weary faces light up as visitors are announced, they are all smiles and graces, they make happy eyes and piquant conversation, and all is well.

## Ulric Bargains about a Cow 73

But they have no stübli, where, with loving hearts and lowered voices, hopes, anxieties, opinions, and beliefs are truly shared, truly understood, worked out, or patiently borne; where, in evil days, no forced smiles are needed, because two hearts, in communion with God and with each other, have a peace which passes understanding. Happy are they who do not despise such a refuge, and who make it indeed a holy place!

The farmer and his wife were seated quietly at the table, drinking coffee; he asked Ulric for an account of himself, and she—either of her own accord, or, at a sign from her husband—gave him a cup also, saying, Sit down; the weather is warm, and you must be thirsty. Ulric said she was very kind, and it was not necessary; then sat down, and related all that had happened, from beginning to end. It would have been impossible to him, in that place, to swerve from the simple truth. He counted out all the money he had received, and handed it to the master; the farmer smiled, and the mistress said he had made a good business of it, she had not thought he was so cunning. They ate and drank together, then the master gathered up his money: he separated the overplus which he had promised Ulric, and gave it to him saying, That belongs justly to you.

Ulric said Yes! if it had been some small sum, but a louis is far too much, and I will not take it. You have gained it, said the master, and perhaps you would not have been so clever if you had not thought of profit.

I do not say that I will take nothing; but give me what you think reasonable—a whole louis is not to be thought of for a servant.

Women do not take in principles readily, especially when a louis is in question; they will willingly give it away in small sums, but it seems hard to let it go all at once.

Listen, said the mistress; if Ulric will be reasonable, do not be foolish. If you were to divide it, neither would have cause to complain. Look then, Ulric, you take two thalers, and you, John, put away the other two

with your money, or someone will come, and laugh at your hesitation, and it will be put into next year's Almanac.

Ulric answered, I thank you ; but it is too much.

He thought nothing about it at first ; but afterwards he had a vague feeling that he had not been dealt with quite handsomely.

As to the master, he took up the money without expressing any sentiment of any kind.<sup>1</sup>

In the evening, after supper, John said to his wife that he would go out and see to Ulric. He had kept his Sunday clothes on, and he wondered if he was going to see Katie Hubeckbure ; he would say a word to him about it. He found him, in fact, only waiting for an opportunity to slip away unobserved, and, stepping up to him, he gave him the other two thalers, saying, There, take what belongs to you. If you thought I would keep back what is not rightly mine, you did not know me.

Ulric again began to decline ; but the master said, If it were ten louis instead of one, I must keep my word. Say no more about it. I am glad that you should benefit. But I did not wish to contradict my wife ; we must give in to women a little. In such matters they have not the most just understanding, though their heart is always in the right place.

Ulric's heart beat high with joy on receiving the money, for he had never thought of gaining so much in a single day. Then he said to himself that his master was a fine man, and not one in a hundred would have acted as he had done. As he stood before him his courage rose, and he thought he would consult him about the subject which occupied his thoughts. He did not come to the point, however, until the master, after some indifferent conversation, said, It is time to go to bed. Good-night.

<sup>1</sup> Bodenbauer, the reader begins probably now to feel, is the hero of the book ; his wife, merely average Swiss type ; kept even a little below its level in some things, for better light on the two heroines, when we come to them.--J. R.

## Ulric Bargains about a Cow 75

Good-night, master, said Ulric. But if it is the same to you, I should like to ask you something.

What is it? Speak.

I am thinking about Katie Hubeckbure. I do not suppose she would refuse me if I made her an offer. She is a wonderfully industrious girl, accustomed to all kinds of work, and she does as much as a farm-servant. Besides, it seems a wealthy house, and that would be good for a man who has not much. From the way Katie put it to me, I believe she would let me in, if I went, and I hesitate whether to go or not. You wish me well, and no one can advise me better than you.

What do you want with a servant? asked the master.

I do not want a servant, said Ulric; but I thought Katie would be a suitable wife for me.

Oh, indeed, said the master. The qualifications you mentioned were those of a farm-servant, not those one would look for in a wife. They occupy rather different positions. What good would it do you if your wife did farm-work and understood nothing of housekeeping? It would be so with Katie. She can mow, and load waggons, and work up to her knees in manure; but she cannot make a tasty soup. The daughters never do the cooking except when the mother is ill. If they can only use plenty of butter and eggs they think things must be good. The house is dreadfully ill-managed, and people do not get rich by disorder or extravagance. None of the girls can darn a hole. I question if one of them has ever had a needle in her fingers. Whatever Katie may say, the daughters will not get much; the property is in land, and that will go to the boys. I also have heard of the cousins in Aargau; but that is a mere bait to lead people by the nose. I really do not know where Hubeckbure can have cousins in Aargau. Those girls boast far too much; one thinks it must be needful; their mother did just the same. I was nearly caught by her, and I should have rued it bitterly. Just suppose they were to give you Katie; you would, as son-in-law, be simply an unpaid servant for years and years. Or, if you



set up housekeeping for yourselves, you would have to keep a maid-servant to do Katie's work, while she was treading the manure. Besides, she would never be satisfied, and if she did not waste the milk of four cows she would complain of stint and niggardliness. It could not be wise, in your position, to marry a farmer's daughter of this sort who has always lived in abundance; she would think herself badly off; she would continually be wanting a sempstress or a tailor. She would take it into her head to hold the plough sometimes, it is true, but you may imagine the state of the house while the mistress was out working on the land from morning till night. She would help at haymaking and harvest; but between times she would be an idle sloven. She would throw it at you two or three times a day that she had been happy in a plentiful home, and that she had brought herself to misery and poverty, when she might have married a wealthy farmer. Now, Ulric, do as you will; you have asked my opinion, and there it is.

Ulric had listened with great attention: he answered, I will go and take my Sunday clothes off. You have put farmers' daughters out of my head. And I see that, when a man wants a wife, he must not look for a servant. By such a marriage I should be a servant myself, and gain nothing but a lot of children and a bad wife. If you had not turned me from it, I should have had a worse handful than with Stini or Ursi. It is well to have someone near who is wiser than one's self.

Yes, said the master, it is well; but then he must be trusted and believed, or no good can result.

You are right, said Ulric; but I have sense enough now to tell you my affairs, and to take your advice. Thank you, master, for what you have said to me to-night.

I have advised you for the best, said the master; but do not repeat what I have told you.

Do not be uneasy, master, answered Ulric. I keep such things to myself.

# The Just Desires of a Servant 77

## CHAPTER VII

HOW A GOOD MAN UNDERSTANDS THE JUST DESIRES  
OF HIS SERVANT, AND FAVOURS THEM IN A DISIN-  
TERESTED MANNER

“ Every man his chance ? Nay, let us say, ‘ Every man his certainty ’  
—certainty, that if he does well, he will be honoured and aided,  
and advanced in such degree as may be fitting for his faculty,  
and consistent with his place.”

•  
So Ulric's ideas of marriage were set at rest for a time, and he became again the active, careful, zealous servant, who devoted his attention to his duties. His horses and cows were the finest to be seen far and near, and the master said the manure-heap was managed to perfection. For, said he, when any one has understanding, he can make the straw go twice as far as another. I have had servants to whom I have spoken of this in vain, they *would* go on in the way they said they had been used to. Much good may it do them ! Nothing makes me more angry than these stupid fellows who know nothing and will learn nothing.

Ulric was also a first-rate waggoner. He drove his four horses gently and easily, and they drew a third more than others. He held the plough as well as an old farmer, and he could sow seed with the best. He could be trusted with the little seeds, clover, flax, etc., and the mistress said she could not tell the difference between his sowing and her husband's. John often said that things went on just the same whether he was at home or not, and remarked what a comfort it was to have a good, trustworthy man, instead of a blockhead, who had no mind for anything good.

The farmers would answer him, Yes ! You can give the wages ; we cannot afford such expensive servants. He told them that if they would reckon they would find that the cheapest servants are generally the dearest in the end.

## 78      Ulric, the Farm Servant

They were not willing to admit this, and they were not singular. People are too apt to be attracted by the low price of an article, instead of considering its serviceableness.

So John was proud of his servant and raised his wages to forty thalers. Ulric, though he dressed well, was able to save quite half of this sum. He had nearly a hundred and fifty crowns in the Savings Bank, and he looked upon himself as a man of means. But the more people gain, the more they wish to gain. The desire for money grows with saving, just as appetite sometimes grows with eating. They become impatient for some way which will lead more rapidly to fortune. This malady of avarice attacked Ulric, and he could not rest without thinking of setting up for himself in some way, or changing to a situation with higher wages. He thought he ought to have at least sixty crowns, or probably a hundred, as groom or ostler. Certainly, he should regret leaving Farmer Boden, all the family were so kind to him; but he said everyone ought to look after his own interest.

The master perceived what was working in Ulric's mind, but he did not show any vexation. He was not one of those who think that a servant who has received kindness must, therefore, sacrifice himself by working all his life for wages which are not in proportion to his capacity. I do not speak now of the desire of most servants to make a change every year, in order to get one or two more crowns, without considering their own powers, the work that will be required of them, and the moral character and protection of the house to which they go.

It is true that a master is entitled to enjoy for some time the benefit of the improved servant; the good that he has done him has been, in one way, a payment of wages. But only to a certain extent. He must not be selfish; and if he cannot reward him suitably in his household, he must help to place him elsewhere; thus he wins his gratitude and secures a friend for life.

## The Just Desires of a Servant 79

John did not see this quite clearly at first, and he felt annoyed to have borne with Ulric, instructed and improved him, just for him to leave when he was most valuable ; but he checked the feeling, did not show it, and finally decided either to pay Ulric as much as he was worth, or to be content to part with him. So that he spoke without any resentment when Ulric, in his acquired confidence in his master, consulted him as to what he had better take in hand in order to better himself.

I understand, he said, that you cannot always stay with me. You are young, and you must make use of your youth. I cannot add much more to your wages, however profitable it might be to me to do so. But you cannot think of taking a business with your hundred and fifty crowns. Those who have not sufficient money in hand are always tied and hampered. They have to sell cheap for ready money, and buy dear on credit. They never succeed ; they are always on the brink of ruin ; they get into debt, and are finally overwhelmed. It is still worse with a little farm. I am always sorry when I see men set up in small holdings with insufficient means. When they have to use all the produce for their own living, how can they pay the rent ? You have only money enough to buy stock, and how could you possibly get on ? No ; have patience, and a favourable opportunity may occur. And be sure I will think of you if I hear of a well-paid place, or anything likely to suit you. But do not go as ostler ; it is not a calling which conduces to health of mind or body ; there are many temptations to intemperance, and you would not advance towards an honourable future. I am grieved that we must part, but I do not complain. You have spoken candidly, and told me your intentions beforehand ; and you have seen that I am entitled to your confidence. You will soon have been ten years with me, and I also have profited by your improvement in conduct and capacity. Depend upon it, if anything occurs, I will think of you. You will also look out for yourself, only let me know in good time if you are successful.

## 80      Ulric, the Farm Servant

So master and man were frank with each other, and both were the better for it.

It was autumn, and the whole country presented a scene of rich abundance; the trees were laden with fruit, the meadows were full of cows. There were signs of life and activity everywhere, from the squirrels in the pear-trees to the busy troops of potato-diggers on the land; hunters abounded in the woods, and the wine-country was invaded by swarms of inn-keepers.

John had brought his horses from the field; he was filling his evening pipe on the terrace, and disposed to enjoy it, while he was waiting for supper, on the bench in front of the house, when his wife came from the cellar, quite out of breath with the exertion of stowing away the abundant produce, and said, Really, John, I do not know what is to be done with the fruit. Our places are all filled up, and yet thousands of basketfuls are still hanging on the trees. You ought to dispose of it. It would be better to sell it for almost nothing than to let it rot. The good God has made it to grow, and somebody should have the benefit of it.

I have been thinking about it, wife, said John; it would not be right to let it waste. Will you go with me to the fair to-morrow? I have several things to do. I must see for a cow, find the butcher who has not paid me for the calf, and speak to a notary on affairs of the commune. I could, at the same time, look out for a distiller of vinegar or brandy who would take the fruit wholesale.

What can you be thinking of, John? How could I be away, even if we had not the tailors in the house? Could I leave them to help themselves to cloth and thread? That might do very well for them, but it would not do for me. My best day's work will be to stop at home. Besides, it would be a strange thing to leave the house to tailors and maid-servants all the day long. But go you. Take horse and cart and a load of apples with you.

## The Just Desires of a Servant 81

That would be a poor look-out, said John ; the market will be overstocked, and the apples would not pay for the wear and tear of horse and cart. But I will drive, however ; my legs ache. To-morrow we cannot plough, and they can lead manure with three horses as well as with four ; they cannot load heavily, the ground is too wet.

You are right to drive, and not to tire yourself needlessly, said his wife. But you must take a butter-ball with you. I will see to the churning directly. I shall be able to give the tailors a slice of bread-and-butter for lunch. It will be a treat for them, and perhaps they will eat less at dinner.

Ulric, said the master after supper, look after Blass, so that I may drive him in the morning ; and clean up the spring-cart : it has not been used for a long time. I do not like to be seen on the high-roads with carts like those of the Oberaargau people and the farmers round Berne ; there is the mud of years on the spokes and the hoops of the wheels, and one would think they did not know how to wash out their carts. They are as dirty and untidy as the spaces round their houses. They leave the heaps of shavings which their grandfathers swept up, so that if they were to return to life, they would feel quite at home.

The tailors laughed, for each knew enough of the farmers about Berne to justify John's sayings.

In the morning the fine white horse and the clean spring-cart stood before the door. The farmer's wife put on her husband's neckerchief and arranged his collar for him, so that he might look his best ; unfolded a pocket-handkerchief to see that there was not a hole in it, put it into his pocket, and asked him if he had everything he wanted. He gave some detailed instructions to Ulric, and got into the cart. His wife had the butter-basket ready, covered with a white, red-bordered cloth. She handed it up to him and said he might put it on the seat for the present, but if he had the chance of a prettier and more lively companion, he must not refuse it. She

## 82      Ulric, the Farm Servant

was not jealous, like Elizabeth Guseburi, who had paid people to watch, and to tell her who had gone driving with her husband. But don't be late home, added she, and bring back the basket and the cloth. Have you everything now?

Yes, said John ; God bless you. Now I am off.

Blass stepped out bravely, and the farmer had the air of a man of importance as his wife and Ulric watched him from the terrace. He had gone a hundred paces, and Ulric was about to return to the stable, when he stopped. Run quickly, Ulric, said the wife ; he has left something. I wonder sometimes he does not forget his head. He is the most forgetful man under the sun, she continued, in a low tone, while Ulric ran to the master and received directions to look for some papers which he had laid ready on the table of the little parlour. The good wife heard what he said, hastened in, and met Ulric with them ; her husband again set off, and when he was out of sight, she went in, saying to herself, I am always glad when he is off at last, he keeps me going, and he generally forgets something.

John drove on, looking about him with the observant eye of an experienced farmer. He beheld on all sides the progress of autumn labour, the sowing of corn, and the digging of potatoes. He was especially interested in the fruit-trees, and on the look-out for some variety which he did not at present possess.

He saw at some distance before him a slender little woman, carrying a heavy basket, walking rather wearily, but showing a rosy face as she turned to look at him. Ho ! Blass ; step out a little, he said, then soon overtook Anna Mareili, who was a neighbour, pulled up, and offered her the vacant seat. She accepted it gladly, and said, I knew you at a distance, and thought to myself that I should not say no if you offered to take me up.

Then give me the basket, said John. He pushed back the leather apron, bestowed the basket underneath, offered one hand to the young woman, and restrained Blass with the other.

## The Just Desires of a Servant 83

Thank you, said Anna Mareili. I am fortunate indeed. That basket would have been very heavy to carry all the way ; but I was anxious to take something to sell, because I have so much to buy with the money which it will fetch.

You have no money at home, then ? said John.

Not so, said Anna Marcili, the young, active wife of a neighbour ; but it is better to sell what we can do without, than to spend our reserve of money.

For so young a woman, you do not reason amiss, said John.

Oh ! said Anna Mareili, the oldest are not always the wisest. Some places would be improved if the young women could do as they would. It is not that I wish to complain, but my husband's mother has some ways which, it seems to me, are not quite of the best. I do not say anything ; you cannot change old people, and it is always a mistake when a son's wife expects to have all her own way. In youth one can put up with things better, but in age it is very trying when the new-comer thinks she must set all to rights, and upset everything which does not please her.

John, of course, answered as such a sensible man should ; and with similar conversation, they proceeded on their way. They passed droves of cattle, bowed right and left to their acquaintances, and Anna Mareili felt very happy and almost proud in the fine cart beside the well-to-do farmer. When they arrived, she jumped out first, received the two baskets, and said if he would trust her, she would sell his butter with hers, it would be no trouble, and she knew men did not like having it to do. You do me a great favour, Anna Mareili, said John ; but I will carry the baskets to the butter-market : I can do so more easily than you. Anna Mareili demurred politely, but consented, and John asked her when she would like to go back ; she should drive home with him ; he did not wish to be late. She arranged to meet him at dinner-time and give him the money for the butter ; then they could see what time they had better start.



## 84      Ulric, the Farm Servant

John went about his business and accomplished his various commissions. Towards midday he heard himself addressed by some one in the crowd. Cousin John, wait. Cousin John, listen to me. He stopped and looked about, but did not see where the voice came from. He was going on again, when a little infirm old man made his way to him, and said, panting for breath, I was afraid I should never be able to get to you.

Oh, you are kindly welcome, cousin, said John; but I should never have thought of meeting you here. What brings you so far to market?

I came on purpose to see *you*. I want to speak to you if you have time to listen to me.

Why not, cousin? Speak on.

Oh, not here, said the little man. I should like to find a quiet corner, out of the way of all this coming and going; but I am a stranger in this place.

Come with me, then, said John. I know where to take you. The hostess of the inn where I put up is a distant cousin of mine, and she is always ready to oblige me. She will give us a little parlour if she can manage it.

The kind hostess gave them her own little room, with many apologies. She said the house had never been so full as on that day, and there was not another corner at liberty, but they could have a quiet talk there, and she would bring them what refreshment they required. Just a bottle of wine now, said the little man, and something to eat at dinner-time. Bring good wine, and be sure that the meat is tender. I cannot chew it if it is tough. Formerly I did not mind about it, but now I feel old age everywhere, and I often wish that my time was ended.

Oh, cousin, said John, one would not think it from your appearance, and if *you* complain, what are *we* to say who have not the tenth part of your means?

Listen, cousin. Riches have nothing to do with it. I experience their worthlessness every day, and I came here on purpose to have a talk with you about all the worry which they occasion me. You know that I have a

## The Just Desires of a Servant 85

large estate, and I am obliged to employ a great number of workpeople. My wife and I are old, and we cannot see about things as we used to do. My son John has become such a fine gentleman in foreign parts, that he will not work on the land, and I must needs buy him an inn. I cannot depend upon him for anything except a visit now and then when he is in want of money. My daughter is of no use whatever. She thought she would be far behind her brother if she did not go away to learn French and fine manners; and now—God help me—she is a sickly, idle thing, and can do nothing but a bit of knitting now and then in the chimney-corner. If she is wanted to lend a hand to any useful work, she thinks it would be the death of her; and her face is the colour of new cheese. Under these circumstances, you may judge how things go with our workpeople. One slips away here, another there; they do nothing thoroughly. The land is out of heart; the farm scarcely produces enough to pay expenses. If I were entirely dependent upon it, I could not keep on such a farm. There are not a dozen such in the whole canton of Berne. I thought I had a good upper servant who managed everything. He has been with me eleven years, and I had the fullest confidence in him. Now I find that the miller paid me for fifty measures of corn when he received sixty, and the rascals made merry with the remainder. At last a day-labourer, whose godfather I am, could not bear to see me imposed upon any longer, and told me how I was constantly cheated; but he said I must on no account say that I had found it out through him. They all knew this, but there was no one to tell me, because they all enrich themselves at my expense. Now you may imagine the difficulty I am in. I will not sell the farm, though my son would like me to do so; he or his children may yet take pleasure in it. I will not let it, because, if I had a tenant, I could not direct anything, and the land would be completely ruined. I assure you I could not die in peace. My father gave up the farm to me in good condition, and how could I meet him

again if I left it all in disorder? I should like an upper servant, one of the right sort, who has head and hands, and a good understanding, and who may be depended on. But he must be from another neighbourhood; all about me put their heads together and watch me, and try to make a prey of me. I thought you were the most likely man to help me, and I have come on purpose to see you. I should not hesitate about wages. I would give sixty crowns,—a hundred, if I could meet with the sort of man I want.

John had been quite silent, and when his cousin had finished speaking he did not reply. The hostess came in and laid the table. She said they must be so kind as to take things as they were, it was such a busy market-day she could not serve them quite as she would like. She did not know if the dishes would be to their taste; she had brought the best she could. The cousin kept up a conversation with her, but John did not say much. Then a maid-servant came and said a woman was asking for Farmer Boden. The hostess joked and said he must have made an appointment. The maid said, She is a pretty one, too. As soon as John was out of the room, the cousin said, Is he that sort of man? I could not have believed it of him.

Take care what you say, said the hostess. There is no harm in this. He is one of the best of men. This is very likely to be a farmer's wife, who would like to drive home with him.

John returned, bringing a basket with him, and remarked that a neighbour had sold his butter for him; she did not want to wait, but would drive home with someone else if he pleased.

The little man said that would be a pity, as he was going her way; he had seemed unsettled for a long time, expecting somebody. He had only half listened to him, and given him no answer.

You are quite wrong, cousin, said John. I have been thinking, and I have not been able to answer because a struggle has been going on in my mind. I could not

## The Just Desires of a Servant 87

decide to tell you that I have just such a servant as you want. I acknowledge that I should be grieved to lose him. I could not easily meet with such another. But I ought not to stand in his way.

Just so, said the cousin; but why will you part with him? What don't you like about him?

Nothing, said John. He is just right for me; but he looks for higher wages, and he deserves them. He can manage land and labour and stock with the best of farmers, and he is so honest that you might leave him in a king's treasure-chamber, and he would not touch a kreutzer; all is safe with him.

He would do for me, said the cousin; he is exactly the man I want. And what do you think? Would he come to me for forty crowns? That is a fine sum.<sup>1</sup>

Just what I give him myself, said John. If you want him, you must give him sixty at least.

Is he related to you? asked the cousin.

No, said John; he was a poor lad when he came to me.

After a series of inquiries, the suspicious cousin at last decided to drive back with John and see the servant for himself, while John began to be sorry that he had ever mentioned him. The cousin paid the whole reckoning, though John protested.

When they went out Anna Mareili came forward and said she had made a fine miss of it. Ulric Burris had promised to drive her home; he would not take a refusal; she must wait there. She had waited and looked for him in vain. She was ashamed of being so long at the fair, and if she were to run all the way back, she could not now be home until ever so late. John said the old place was ready for her; and so they drove away, John in front, and the cousin in his handsome spring-cart behind. Joggeli, after much reflection during his solitary

<sup>1</sup> The reader will please note the working out of the character of Joggeli; it is one of Gottlieb's subtlest studies. The sixty or a hundred crowns gone to forty, and the question in next sentence, "Is he related to you?"—J. R.

drive, called to John, when they were about an hour from their destination, to know if there was a smith in the next village; his horse would cast a shoe if he did not get it fastened on. John said there was, and he would wait for him; there was an inn close by. But Joggeli reminded him that the woman was in a hurry, said it was not worth while for him to put up, and he should soon follow. So John drove on.

Joggeli went slowly to the inn, had his horse taken out, and, for appearance' sake, had a nail put in one of his shoes. Meantime he asked the ostler what sort of a farmer that was who had driven by, and if that was his wife?

No, said the man.

Then they are very fond of each other?

I have heard nothing of the kind, said the ostler.

He had a fine horse in his cart, said Joggeli. I want just such a one, and have not got suited at the fair. Has he many horses?

He has a whole stableful, said the ostler.

You seldom meet with a good horse where there are so many; they are badly fed, and they look like it, suggested Joggeli.

That is not the case at Farmer Boden's. Everything belonging to him is well cared for, and he has a first-rate servant; there is not such another for miles round.

Then Joggeli went into the inn parlour, and began much the same kind of conversation with the hostess over a bottle of wine. With various turnings, he came at last to the same point—John was a fine man, his wife an irreproachable woman, and his servant so valuable that many had tried to get him; but the master and man were attached to each other, and would not part. *Have they not had some little difference lately?*<sup>1</sup> asked Joggeli. Not that they knew of; they had had wine with each other there on the preceding Sunday, and seemed on excellent terms.

<sup>1</sup> Italics mine; the whole dialogue is quite wonderful.—J. R.

## The Just Desires of a Servant 89

In the meantime John had driven home, and taken Anna Mareili with him. When his wife came out and took the whip, John said, Now, wife, you must be very agreeable, or Anna Mareili will stop with me.

Then I must take pains to please you, said Eisi, pleasantly. She lifted out the baskets, and said Anna Mareili must come in and have a cup of coffee. Anna Mareili made many objections, said she should have some at home, and remarked that she ought to have got out of the conveyance before—she would not like to meet some wives when she had been driving with their husbands, and she would not venture it for any money. Did you think I was jealous? said the wife, laughing. No; I am too old for that. There was a time when I thought John ought to look displeased with all other women. But that passes away gradually, when one sees that there is no reason to be jealous. That gave rise to various histories of jealous wives as they sat drinking coffee, when the wife jumped up and said, Who is this driving towards the house?

Oh, I forgot; it is cousin Joggeli, of the Steinbrucke; he will stay the night with us.

Well, I declare! and you never to mention it! What a man you are! And what does the cousin want? He has been years and years without coming to see us.

You will see soon enough, said John.

Anna Mareili took leave, and met the cousin driving in. The master and mistress stood at the house-door to receive him, and Ulric sprang forward to take his horse. Joggeli stepped down slowly and with difficulty, but did not fail to give his directions. Rub him down a little, and don't give him anything to drink immediately; he is warm. He asked John if he was still foddering with old hay, and took care to satisfy himself by various inquiries before he proceeded, with tottering steps, to the house.

He was scarcely seated, when he asked, Was that Ulric?

Yes, said John.

He seems to me rather young and lithe.

He is nearly thirty, said John, and active on his legs. I do not like men who move as if they had heavy weights fastened to their heels.

Then he went to the cellar and fetched wine and cheese. As he passed the kitchen his wife asked him, Why does he inquire about Ulric? What has he to do with him?

I have not time to tell you now, answered John. Come in, and you will hear all about it.

What is the matter with John? thought his wife; I have not seen him look so strange for a long time. She found Joggeli complaining of his sufferings and disappointments; but as soon as John had gone to look after the work of the day, he said to her, What is amiss with your servant Ulric? John has recommended him to me.

There cannot possibly be anything, replied the wife; he is the best servant far and wide; we have never had his equal.

Just so, said Joggeli; but how does he go on with the girls? He looks to me as if he would be one of the worst.

It would be well, said the wife, if there were none worse than he.

Oh, indeed! said Joggeli. John drove a pretty little woman home with him to-day, and brought her to the house, as I saw. Who is she?

That is our neighbour, an excellent woman, who is very dear to me, and her house is the only one to which I often go.

Then, returning to the former subject, Joggeli said, So you really can't do with Ulric?

Who could say such a thing? she replied, hastily. Surely John will not be such a fool as to part with his right hand, and I also shall have something to say on the subject.

Then John came back, and they talked on indifferent matters; but when Eisi had gone, Joggeli returned to the charge, and remarked, I see, John, that your wife

## The Just Desires of a Servant 91

has a great liking for Ulric, and thinks a great deal of him.

Yes, said John ; no one has ever pleased her so well ; she had something to complain of in the rest, but he has given her satisfaction for years.

It would, perhaps, be no pity if they were parted, said Joggeli. I do not wish to say any harm of your wife, but it is not always best when wives and servants agree so very well.

Oh, in a case like ours, there is no objection to it. My wife and I are so entirely at one, that neither of us desires to make a party against the other. And for a long time there has been a pleasant feeling with the servants also ; they have been at peace with each other, and they have made no league against us. This state of things is good and happy for all concerned.

I do not know that, said Joggeli. If you had my experience, you would understand that when the servants are all of one mind, the master is sure to be the sufferer.

The wife could not make out what all the talk was tending to, until at table Ulric was again the subject of the conversation, and she became convinced that he was really proposed as head-servant to Joggeli. Then she said to her husband, Do think, I beg you, John, what you are doing.

I should not like to stand in the way of Ulric's good fortune.

All is not good fortune which seems so, said she, in a low tone, and went out of the room.



## CHAPTER VIII

## HOW ULRIC LEFT HIS OLD PLACE

“The universal law of the matter is that, assuming any given quantity of energy and sense in master and servant, the greatest material result obtainable by them will be, not through antagonism to each other, but through affection for each other.”

THEN Joggeli urged an immediate interview with Ulric. John thought there was no hurry; he had better look about him first, judge for himself how the work was done, and speak to Ulric to-morrow. But this was not what he wanted. He said he must be off betimes in the morning; he would settle the matter to-day, and then, perhaps, he might get a good night's rest. He had had scarcely any sleep lately, because his mind had been troubled and disturbed.

So Ulric was called into the little parlour; and he presented himself at the door, full of curiosity. Joggeli filled his glass, brought it to Ulric, and said, Pledge me, and come and sit down; I have something to say to you. Then he proceeded to tell him that he wanted a head-servant, that Farmer Boden had recommended him, that he gave good wages, and would not object to raising them if he was well suited, adding, If you would like to come, name the wages, and we will settle the matter at once.

Ulric was quite stunned. At last he said he was well off where he was, and he had no wish to leave; but if the master thought it best, he would accept this place, though with regret. You had better try it, said John, and if you do not suit each other, I will take you back any hour.

And now what wages do you ask? said Joggeli.

The master must name them for me, said Ulric.

Well, said John, what would you both think of sixty crowns, two pairs of shoes, and four shirts, besides drink-money?

## How Ulric left his Old Place 93

Ulric said that would be right for him, and Joggeli replied that it was a good deal, and they might have named something less to begin with, but he would not chaffer, and he would engage him on those terms, only he could not promise much drink-money—the stableman got it for the horses, and the milker for the cows. Very well, said John; you can make him a handsome present at the new year if he suits you. Joggeli said he would gladly do that, and, to begin with, he would give him twenty batzen of earnest-money, and he would expect him when the right time came. So he put the money into his hand; and the thing was done before John and Ulric had time to look at each other, and before the farmer's wife could press her objections. Joggeli said he thought it best to settle it at once, for there was no telling what might happen. One never knows, he remarked, what changes one night may bring.

And the old fox was certainly right. Elisi was silent; there was no use in protesting now. But as soon as she was alone with John, she compensated herself for the self-restraint she had exercised. Tell me now what you are thinking of. I would not have believed that you could be so foolish. Never since we have been married have you given me so much vexation. You are often out, and how can things go on without Ulric? All the old anxiety will come back again. You go and offer the best of servants to an old fool who trusts no one, and is never satisfied. Some one should manage for you, my dear. I do not think you could have been in your right sober senses when you did it. Only tell me what you were thinking about?

John's reasons did not now appear so conclusive even to himself. He did not feel satisfied, and he scarcely knew what to say; but he replied, I thought to make Ulric's fortune. He cannot always remain a servant, and if he is to set up for himself, he must have money, and I am not able to give him higher wages. But his wife would hear nothing of the fortune for Ulric, nor allow that they could not afford him better wages. In

fact, she had no lack of words ; and she did not let John sleep much that night. Ulric did not sleep either ; he was half sorry for having consented to leave Farmer Boden's family. But Joggeli slept so soundly that his snoring was heard all over the house.

The next morning all felt disturbed, but Joggeli was not concerned by their long faces. He made haste to be off, gave Ulric another red batz, and drove away quite satisfied.

When he was gone, Ulric felt that he would like to give up the bargain, and the mistress was of the same mind. Why need they put themselves out for Joggeli ? He had never done anything for them, and never would do. He lived seven hours' journey away from them, and perhaps they might never see him again. Ulric, on his part, said he should not mind it so much if he were going to be alone in his new place ; but he could not bear the thought of having to direct three or four farmmen and a number of young women and day-labourers. He knew well how it would be. If he gave in to them, they would all trample upon him and despise him, and he would not have that ; or if he wished to govern them, they would rebel, and perhaps the master would not support him. It would be best to return the earnest-money at once.

But John was not of this opinion, he said. It would be bad behaviour to a stranger, still more to a relation. Nothing happens by chance, and we do not know what good may come out of this. Things that are unpromising at first sometimes turn out most favourably. We must abide by the agreement, and it may be best for both sides. If you begin gently, Ulric, you may make way and manage well. And as regards ourselves, we shall not be badly off with Hans : he has been well trained, and he has much goodwill. At all events, the thing is done, and cannot be altered, so now we had better reconcile ourselves to it, and say as little about it as possible.

The time passed quickly, and Christmas-tide ap-

## How Ulric left his Old Place 95

proached. Tailors, sempstresses, and shoemakers took their turn in the house. It was not said that they were working chiefly for Ulric, but so it was. Either the mistress had a remnant of linen, not required for anything, which would make one or two shirts for him, or the master had a coat which was too small, or a vest which did not quite please him. Things were altered and made, and his outfit was prepared, like that of a son who is leaving his father's house.

One evening the master said he had better go the next day to fetch his certificate from the parson. Master, said Ulric, I do not like the thoughts of going. It is true that I regard and respect the parson; his preaching has done me good, and he has taught me that one cannot deserve the name of a man without loving the Saviour and keeping His commandments. But I was a wild and tiresome lad at the time of the Instruction, he must have had great trouble with me, and I have avoided him ever since. I should not like to see him now; he would not know that I am sorry for the past, and that I am changed since those days. He might lecture me sharply. You could easily get the certificate for me.

No, said the farmer; it is right and proper for you to go yourself, and if you get a word of advice, it will not hurt you.

So there was no help for it, and Ulric had to go. He went with a heavy heart to the Parsonage, and he felt full of trepidation when he was invited in. When the parson said, What do you want? what can I do for you? he could scarcely bring out his request for a certificate. The parson opened great books, and said, Your name is Ulric Merk; your father was called Christian, your mother Mädle Smock; Gaspard Menech was your godfather. Then Ulric was much surprised; he had grown a foot taller since the Instruction, and he did not expect to be recognised at first. The pastor resumed, So you are going to Steinbrucke, in the parish of Ueflige? I shall rejoice if it is for your advantage. I have already

had much pleasure in your good conduct, for nothing gives me more satisfaction than to see anyone turning to a better way. I did not expect it of you during your time of Instruction, but the good God often does more than we look for. Do not forget at Steinbrucke that the same Lord is with you there, and that secret things are open to His all-seeing eyes. As you will be entrusted with much, much will be required of you, and you will have still greater need of God's help to preserve your integrity. Try to realise what you say when you pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and remember the Saviour's words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." I shall always be glad to hear of you, and when you come to visit your old employers, I shall be heartily glad to see you, if you will come and let me know how you are going on.

Ulric went away quite touched and astonished, and hastened to tell his master of the reception he had met with. Only think! said he; the minister knew me, and knew all about me: knew that I had reformed myself, and that I was going to the Steinbrucke; and I fancy he has even some idea of the state of things there. How is it possible? he has never spoken to me since the Instruction, and he has not been to see you for a long time. The master replied, This is the effect of *character*; you remember I have talked to you about it; a good name spreads far, and a bad one yet farther, and no one is too insignificant to be spoken of. A minister pays attention to this character, so that he may know how to speak to people when occasion serves. A word spoken in season has often a good effect, and it hurts no one to know that he is observed.

I confess, said Ulric, that the encouragement has made me glad, and I no longer regret having had to go myself. The minister said one or two things to me that I shall never forget.

The master resolved to take Ulric to the Steinbrucke; thus he would spare him expense by the way, and have

the opportunity of advising him better when he saw things with his own eyes. Ulric left nearly all his wages behind, and he had now considerably more than a hundred and fifty crowns in the savings bank. He had a strong box, with a good lock, to take with him, and all his preparations were completed.

The new year came, and with it the plentiful table and the usual outward signs of festivity. Formerly they had had merry times, but now no one could resist the sadness which all had tried to overcome. Ulric said, Do I sit here for the last time? and the tears poured down his cheeks. He stood up, and went away. They were all in tears, and could not eat, till at last Eisi said, John, do find Ulric, and fetch him in. He is going, and it has not been my doing, but let us spend the last hours together!

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NUTBROWN EYES

“Bright maiden’s grace.”

ON the following morning the sledge was prepared, Ulric’s box was fastened on, and he had breakfast in the little parlour with his master and mistress, on coffee, cheese, and an omelette.\* He lingered when all was ready, and when there was no excuse for further delay, he took the mistress’s hand, and said, Good-bye, mother, and don’t be vexed. He could not restrain his tears, and Eisi had to put her apron to her eyes. She said, I do not know why I should be vexed if all goes well with you; and if not, come back to us, the sooner the better. The children would scarcely let him go, and Ulric felt as if his heart would break. Then the master said they must be off if they meant to arrive that day, and it was not the last time they would see each other. When the

## 98      Ulric, the Farm Servant

sledge was out of sight, Eisi slowly dried her eyes, and tried to comfort the weeping children.

The two travellers drove on in silence through the glistening snow. No, no! said the master, from time to time, when the lively Blass broke into a gallop, drew the sledge as fast as an arrow, and sent the snow flying with his rapid movements.

I am very much troubled, said Ulric at last; every step that brings me nearer seems to add to my burden. I see plainly that I am going into misfortune.

No, said the master; do not take this for a presentiment of evil. Remember how you felt ten years' ago, when I urged you to amendment. How hard it seemed to you, and how little faith you had in your own future. Yet, by degrees, the improvement came, your confidence grew, and now you are a man of whom it may be said, that you have won your way. So do not be troubled; what you have before you is much easier; and, at the worst, you will return to me in a year. Act with circumspection, and be firm; my cousin is dreadfully mistrustful, but when he once knows you, he will value you. The servants will be the most difficult to deal with; do things quietly, by degrees; try kindness first; and, if that will not do, assert your authority, and show them that you will not put up with what is wrong.

It was a clear bright January day when Ulric and Farmer Boden arrived at the Steinbrücke through tracts of open fields, between white hedges and glistening trees. The estate lay about a quarter of a league from Uefflige, and consisted of more than a hundred acres of fertile land, not all in one enclosure, but some of it detached, at a little distance. In some places the land might suffer in wet years, but this might be mended.

When they drove up, Joggeli was tottering with his stick about the house, which lay rather low; he said, I have been looking out for you a long time; I thought you were not coming. Here, one of you, take the horse! He called towards the stables adjoining the house; but no one came, and Ulric had to loose Blass himself. He

asked where he must put him. Come here, one of you, will you? shouted Joggeli again; and on receiving no answer, he went angrily to the stable, knocked the door open, and saw the groom rubbing down a horse with the greatest composure. Don't you hear when you are called? said Joggeli.

I heard nothing.

Then listen better next time, and take this horse now.

The groom muttered that he must make room for him first, and made as much commotion amongst the horses as a hawk in a dove-cot. They rushed against the mangers, and kicked so that Ulric was in danger of his life as he made way with his white horse to the hindmost part of the stable. Then he could find no halter, and the groom said he ought to have brought one with him. This was the first answer he received in his new place! When he returned to the sledge and unfastened his box, Joggeli said the wood-cutters were to carry it; but no one moved. At last they sent the boy, who let go his hold on the stairs, so that Ulric was almost thrown backwards, and it was owing to his own strength that he escaped a dangerous fall.

The room into which he was shown was dark; it could not be heated, and there were two beds in it. He was standing full of dismay, when some one called to him to go down and have some warm food. He opened the door, and was received by a beautiful young girl, with nutbrown hair and eyes, red and white complexion, rosy lips, and dazzlingly white teeth. She was tall and strong, and brilliantly healthy, though her figure was slender and graceful. She had a serious manner, with reserved possibilities of jest and playfulness, combined with unmistakable goodness and dignity of nature. All about her there was that well-known but indescribable something which, where it exists, testifies to inward and outward purity—to a soul that shrinks from all that is base, and to a person which is always neat and clean, even in the midst of the roughest and dirtiest work. Freneli was



## 100      Ulric, the Farm Servant

a poor relation of the family; in her infancy no one wished to have her, and as she grew older, she was looked upon as a Cinderella; but she always shook off the ashes, and was never troubled by them. She met God and man with a smiling face each new day, and in the brightness of her blooming youth, made a place for herself in people's hearts which they could not deny to her. For a long time she had been loved by her relations, while they thought they disliked her as the illegitimate child of a day-labourer and a young woman belonging to their own family.

Freneli had not opened the door; the brown eyes looked questioningly at Ulric as he stepped out of the room. She invited him downstairs, and preceded him into the living-room, where Joggeli and John were seated at an abundantly spread table. There were hot, smoking dishes of fresh and salt meat, also sourkraut and sliced pears. A stout, pleasant-looking old woman came forward to meet him, brought out her hand from under her apron, and said, as she offered it to him, Are you the new head-servant? Well, if you are as honest as you are handsome, you will do well, I am sure. Sit down and begin. The food stands there to be eaten.

There was also, near the stove, another person, a woman with a thin figure, white face, and pale dull eyes; she had an elegant workbox before her, and wound blue silk from one ball to another, without taking any notice of what was going on about her.

Joggeli related at some length the further discoveries he had made of the dishonesty of his late head-servant, and regretted that severe penalties were not now enforced. Formerly, he said, a man would have been hanged for stealing a rope, and now even women who poison their husbands get off! I wonder which is the worst, a man who is killed contrary to the law or left living contrary to the law? One seems to me as bad as the other. So I think when those who ought to maintain the laws relax them, they are unpardonable before God and man.

During Joggeli's long speech his wife continually urged

John, and specially Ulric, to eat. Take something now; take it; it is there to be eaten! or, Is it not to your taste? We give it as we have it. Joggeli! pour out. See! they have empty glasses. Drink. There is more where that came from: our son gave it to us; it must be good; he bought it himself in foreign parts. It cost actually five and a half batzen, short measure.

When Ulric would not take any more, she took up some of the largest pieces with the fork and pushed them on his plate, saying, I shall be astonished if you cannot manage that. A young fellow like you must eat to keep up his strength. We like people who work for us to have plenty of good food. However, the time came at last when Ulric, more than satisfied, took his hat, said grace, and stood up to go out. Stay, said Joggeli; where are you going? They will have seen to your horse. I gave strict orders about him. Ulric said he would like to look round a little, and the mistress replied, Go, then, but come in again if you are cold; you must not work to-day; do you understand?

He will have something to bear, said Joggeli when he was gone. They look upon his coming with great ill-will. I believe the groom would have liked the place for himself. But it is right for me if they are all at variance. When they agree too well, the master always pays for it.

Oh, said John, that depends upon how you look at it. It is true that when servants are all on one side, and the master on the other, he must be the loser. But if all are at strife, and will rather hinder than give each other a helping hand, then also he and his property must suffer. I think it is always true that "peace is productive, and discord destroys." I am not well pleased with what I see here. No one came to take my horse; no one would help Ulric to carry his box. Each does as he likes, and fears no one. Ulric will not be able to put up with this state of things. If he has responsibility as head-servant, he must also have authority, and not allow all to please themselves. Then they will rebel, and if you wish to keep him, you must support him. I tell you frankly that

he will return to me if he cannot get on here. We shall always have room for him. We are grieved enough to part with him, and my wife cried as if he had been one of our own children. The old mother wiped her eyes at these words, and said, He shall not be badly off with us, Cousin John. It seems to me that we should not mind any wages to a man we can trust.

It is not a matter of wages, said John. His authority must be supported, and his word must be believed. He has been like a son in our house, and it would be something quite strange to him to be treated as a servant.

Oh, said the mother, do not be uneasy ; we will do our utmost. He shall have a cup of coffee whenever we make for ourselves between times. We have our piece of meat every day, and the servants only on Sunday. Where should we be if we gave it to them every day? But if you think Ulric would like it, he shall have it sometimes.

That is not the thing, either, said John. Ulric would not desire it, and it would make others jealous. If you have confidence in him, and give him help when he needs it, all will go well.

This conversation was not to Joggeli's taste ; he proposed an inspection of the stables and barns, where he kept the farmer the remainder of the day, asking his advice and receiving some. But John could not praise anything. The calves were badly kept ; the sheep were too crowded, and stifled one another. There was need of improvement everywhere. They met Ulric as they re-entered, and invited him in. He was silent and sorrowful all the evening.

The following morning John prepared for departure, after great urging from his host and hostess to make a good breakfast, and also to have a dram to keep out the cold, but he said he never took such a thing in the morning. Ulric kept close to him, like a child who fears that his father will escape him, and when the moment of separation came, he proposed driving part of the way

with him, as it would be a long time before he should see him again.

Well, said John, when they were fairly off, how do you like your new home?

Oh, master, said Ulric, I cannot express what I feel. I have seen many places, but never one like that. There is no order anywhere. The manure-heap is never rightly cleared away: the water from it runs all about the stables; the horses stand higher behind than before; the corn is only half threshed out of the straw. There is piggish disorder everywhere. You can scarcely find the tools. The servants all look at me as if they would eat me; either they give no answer, or reply so impudently that I can hardly keep my hands off them.

Be patient and composed, said John; begin gently, take the reins imperceptibly, do as much as you can yourself, say everything civilly, and try if you can gradually enlist at least some of them on your side. Thus gain time for observation, and acquaint yourself with your surroundings, so that you may know how to act for the best. There is no use in trying to correct everything at once, before you quite understand the state of affairs. When gentleness will not answer, then speak decidedly and show that you will be master; if the worst of the servants have to leave, so much the better. But do not lose heart; you are not a slave; you can go when you please. It is an experience which may do you great good. It is well for you to see things from another point of view, and to learn the difficult art of commanding. This change may be the making of you. Be on good terms with the women; if you have them on your side, you have already won much. But if the old mistress makes too much of you, and invites you to coffee, do not go. Share with the rest, and be always foremost with the work. In this way, you must succeed in the end.

Ulric felt greatly encouraged, but he could scarcely bring himself to part from John. He had so many things to consult him about: the seed-sowing, the culture suitable for that kind of land, and numerous points which

## 104     Ulric, the Farm Servant

crowded into his mind. John stopped at an inn, had a bottle of wine with him, and then sent him away, almost by force.

When Ulric was alone, he felt for the first time his own importance. He was well pleased to walk through the estate which was entrusted to his care, and he went towards the house with the firm step and self-reliant air of a colonel who is expected by a regiment in revolt.

### CHAPTER X

#### HOW ULRIC CONDUCTED HIMSELF AS HEAD-SERVANT

“To the compelling of sloth and the scourging of sin, the strong hand will have to address itself as long as this wretched little dusty and volcanic world breeds nettles and spits fire.”

ULRIC went composedly to the workpeople. Six were threshing, and he proceeded to the cowherd and the groom, who were preparing the fodder. They said they could do it alone, but he replied that he could not assist in the barn to-day, so he would help them, and when they had done the fodder they would remove the manure. They grumbled, but he set to work and shook the dust out of the hay with his accustomed skill, thus silently constraining the others to do better than before. He arranged the hay in little heaps of equal height, and then took a besom and swept the passage which separated the horse from the cow provender. The cowherd said if it had to be done like that always they could not prepare in two days as much as the beasts would eat in one. Ulric said that depended on how you were accustomed to do it. He had great difficulty with the cowherd, who would only take up the top layer of manure from the stable, so he remarked that it was very warm outside, the cows would not take cold, and they would give the stable a thorough turn-out. Certainly it was needful—they

## How Ulric Conducted Himself 105

almost required a pick-axe to get to the stone pavement, and the forking out of the manure between the stones was a refinement of cleanliness, which was left for a future occasion. The receptacle for liquid manure had to be scooped out, as it overflowed about the stable, and Ulric had difficulty in having it carried to the land and utilized. Neither would any one spread the other manure properly with the fork ; they would let it lie in heaps as it was emptied out of the stables, and he was told that it would be foddering time, so it must be left until the next day. Ulric said, It can easily be done now ; manure must be spread while it is warm, especially in winter, otherwise it freezes and cannot be done at all. He set to work himself, and the two servants let him do it, and went to mock at him behind the stable door and in the barn.

Indoors, they were wondering that the new head-servant did not return, and beginning to fear that he had driven off with John, and would not come back any more. Joggeli kept watch at a window which commanded the road ; he was tired and cross and very suspicious, he had never believed that John could be so false with any one, still less with a relation. But no one was to be trusted in these days ! In the midst of his lamentations, Freneli came in and said, You might look out here for long enough ; the new servant is outside, working in the manure ; he has had the stable cleaned out, he thought it should be done thoroughly, and he is now finishing what the others would not do. Why did he not tell me when he returned ? said Joggeli ; and the old mother exclaimed, Why did he not come in for something to eat ? Go and tell him there is some food kept warm for him, and he must come directly. Wait, said Joggeli, I will go myself and see what has been done. But tell him to come, said she, I think he must have a good appetite by this time !

Joggeli went out, and was well pleased to see what Ulric had done ; on his way to seek the cowherd and groom, to show them how a manure-heap ought to be

## 106      Ulric, the Farm Servant

kept, he looked into the barn and saw the provender prepared with care and cleanliness. Then he inspected the stable, and could not believe his eyes when he saw the cows standing comfortably in clean straw. He went to Ulric and said he had not expected him to do the dirtiest and roughest work himself; *that* properly belonged to others. Ulric said there were already too many at the threshing, and he had done it this time to show them how he would have it in future. Joggeli invited him in, but Ulric said he would like to see how the corn had been threshed.

He found all cleared away, and the day's work ended early. The corn was badly threshed, a number of half ears were left, and it was still worse sieved and winnowed. The corn in the bin was dirty, and he would have liked to empty it all out, and have it done over again, but he put a constraint upon himself, and thought he would make the men do it differently in the morning.

When Joggeli went in, he said that the new servant pleased him, it was evident he knew what he was about, if only he would not go his own way so much. One place was not like another, and at this rate, there would be no orders left for him to give in his own house.

After supper, Ulric asked his master what work he had in view for the remainder of the winter; he thought it should be arranged in due succession, so as to be out of the way before the new demands of the spring season.

Yes, said Joggeli, all in good time, but we cannot do every thing at once. The threshing will take three weeks longer, afterwards there will be the wood-cutting, and then it will be spring.

If I may say so, said Ulric, I think we should begin the wood-cutting now—the ground is hard and dry, and the weather is splendid. In February it is generally wet, the ground is soft, and the roads are heavy.

Joggeli said this could not be done, they had never been in the habit of leaving the threshing until February.

That was not what I proposed, said Ulric; they might go on with the corn, while I and another man make

## How Ulric Conducted Himself 107

ready as much wood as the waggoner could drive home, and he also could cut in the meantime.

That would leave a man short in the barn, and delay the corn, said Joggeli; they will soon make an end of the wood-cutting, when they all set to work together.

As you please, said Ulric; but I thought the cowherd might very well thresh, if he had help in the middle of the day with the fodder and the manure. And two good workers often get through more work in a wood, than a crowd of careless men.

Yes, said Joggeli, it is often so; but we will let the wood-cutting stand over, threshing is now the first thing to be considered.

Ulric, after this interview, went to bed much discouraged.

You are a strange man, said the old woman to her husband. All that Ulric said was very sensible, and quite for our advantage. It would be a good thing if those lazy loons, the cowherd and the groom, had something else to do besides lounging about in the sunshine! In this way Ulric will be of no use to you.

I will not be dictated to by a servant; I will show him and every one else that I am master, said Joggeli, hastily.

Yes, you will do that, rejoined his wife. You are so much afraid of the bad that you let them go their own evil way, and you defeat the efforts of the good; that is your way of being master! It has always been so with us, and now it is the same thing over again!

The next morning Ulric told the mistress that one of the maids was not required in the barn, she could be employed at anything that was needed in the house; then he set himself actively to work, and hit with his flail so that the whole length of the corn, from the tip to the root of the ear, must be threshed; and when one floorful was finished, he had it cleared away, and another spread, without loss of time. Ulric urged, not by words, but by the constraint of his own labour.

In the house, they thought they must be using a



## 108      Ulric, the Farm Servant

different kind of flail, the sound was so different. The maid, who was allowed to stay in the house, told Freneli how they abused Ulric, and boasted that they were not going to put up with new regulations. She remarked that it was a pity, for he was a well-mannered fellow, and every one must acknowledge that he knew how to work.

While the business of threshing proceeded in the barn, the groom went out on horseback, with the pretext of going to the blacksmith, the cowherd took out a cow, without saying where he was going, and it was noon before either of them returned.

After dinner, Ulric helped to peel the potatoes that were left: this is usual in farm-houses when time permits, but the others hurried out to amuse themselves, scarcely taking time to say grace. When Ulric went out, great scuffling and wrestling were going on in the barn; he called the cowherd to take out the calves, that he might examine them. The cowherd answered that no one should meddle with his calves, and the groom stepped up to Ulric, and asked him if he would venture to wrestle with him. Ulric's blood boiled, as he saw that it was a planned game, but he felt he must not draw back, nor lose presence of mind. Sooner or later, he well knew that he must have a stand-up fight with them and be put to the test. It was as well that they should find out now what sort of man they had to deal with. So he said, carelessly, Oh! if you will have a try, it is all the same to me; and twice over, he sent the groom on his back with a crash. Then the cowherd said he would have a turn, though it was hardly worth his while to contend with such a walking-stick. He put his brown hairy arms round Ulric, as if he would crush him into dust, but Ulric held his ground and did not swerve. The cowherd worked his arms and legs freely, and butted with his head, until Ulric, weary of the struggle, gathered up all his strength, gave him a blow, and flung him to the far end of the barn, where he lay for some time without knowing where he was. Freneli happened to pass with the food

## How Ulric Conducted Himself 109

for the pigs; she saw Ulric's victory, and told her god-mother how he had been insulted and made to fight. Ulric said he would put off the inspection of the calves to the next day, and took up the flail as if nothing had happened.

The cleaning of the corn took longer this time, and yet they had finished sooner than usual, because they worked with zeal and activity. When Ulric told the master how much corn was done, he said they had not had so much any day that year.

In the evening, when they were all at table, Joggeli came and said he thought it would be well to begin the wood-cutting; the weather was fine, and the horses were doing nothing; the wood-cutting and threshing might proceed together if properly arranged. The groom said the roads were icy, and the horses were not sharpened; another declared that the corn would never get finished if there were fewer than six for the threshing.

Ulric said nothing.

At last, when Joggeli did not know what more to say, he appealed to Ulric for his opinion, and he replied:

The master's orders must be obeyed; Hans, the carter, and I can cut wood; if the cowherd helps to thresh, and the others help *him* with the fodder and the manure, the wood-cutting will not hinder the threshing.

Well then, be it so, said Joggeli, and went away immediately.

Then a violent storm broke over Ulric's head; the carter swore that he would not set foot in the wood, the cowherd that he would not touch the flail, and the others, not to be behindhand, swore that they would not thresh with only four. They would not let themselves be put upon; they were not beasts of burden! They knew what was their due! They were quite aware where such ideas came from, but Ulric had better mind what he was about, if he wished to see a summer at the Steinbrücke; he would not be the first who had come in like a magistrate and been obliged to slink away like a dog! He

## 110      Ulric, the Farm Servant

must be an ill-natured churl to molest his fellow-servants just to curry favour with the master, but they would soon finish him off!

Ulric did not say much, but told them the master's orders must be carried out, and that they might be thankful if they had never any one worse to deal with than himself. He did not wish to put upon any one, and he would not let any one put upon him, he had no reason to fear one of them. He asked the mistress to be good enough to prepare some food for them to take out the next day, as they could not return from the wood-cutting in time for dinner.

In the morning they proceeded to the forest; however the carter grumbled and swore, he had to go. The cowherd was still determined not to thresh, and the master did not appear.

Then the mistress gathered herself up, and went out and told him she thought he need not be above taking a flail, many people superior to him had handled one to good purpose. They could not keep a cowherd who did nothing but gape about him all the morning.

So the wood-cutting was done in no time, and in February the weather and the roads were so bad, that there would have been little pleasure or profit in doing it then.

Though Ulric worked hard out of doors, and exercised his mastership by being foremost in labour, as well as by directing others, he was always ready to help with whatever the mistress gave out in the evenings; he said, the more they all helped each other, the sooner they should have done, and that it was reasonable and customary for all to assist in preparing the food.

If he saw a maidservant carrying a heavy basket of potatoes to the fountain, he would help her with it, or send the boy, who at first had not thought it necessary to go when he was called, but whom Ulric accustomed to obedience.

All is difficult, he said, in a household, when servants do not give mutual help, and nothing is to be done when

## How Ulric Conducted Himself 111

they annoy and vex each other, making the simplest duties burdensome by ill-will and ill-temper.

It was some time before they could perceive the truth of this saying.

One special characteristic of the men at the Steinbrücke was their rudeness to the women ; if a man was asked to help one of the maids, he mocked and swore, and would not move a finger ; even the mistress had to put up with this, and when she appealed to Joggeli he said she was always complaining, and he did not keep men-servants to wait on the women ; they might do nothing else if they were to follow all their fancies.

The very different behaviour of Ulric, who was not accustomed to such discord in a house, offended the men, and drew upon him their angry scorn and mockery, which, provoked also by other causes, became almost insupportable.

On the first Saturday, the cowherd, out of sheer ill-will, refused to clear away the manure from the stable, and said he should do it the next morning. Ulric said there was no reason whatever to put it off, and if they did not take it away, they could not clean up about the house, as was usual on Saturday evenings.

Besides, he said, we are commanded not to work on the Sunday, so certainly it is not right to leave the dirtiest work for that day.

The cowherd said, Sunday this, Sunday the other ! What is Sunday to me ! I shall not do the manure to-day.

Ulric's blood boiled, but he restrained himself and only said, Well, I will do it.

The master, who heard the contention, prudently withdrew, and grumbled to himself, If only Ulric would not order every one about, and introduce new ways ! They have cleared away the manure for long enough on the Sunday morning, and it has done very well ! It might have been right enough for *him* !

## CHAPTER XI

## THE FIRST SUNDAY IN A NEW PLACE

“St. George and the Dragon—combatant both, to the best of their powers.”

ON the Saturday night there was great coming and going, but on the Sunday morning, when Ulric went down at the usual hour, no human being was astir. The horses scraped impatiently, and the cows lowed, but neither groom nor cowherd was to be seen.

Ulric gave the fodder once, then twice, and finally began to milk, for there is nothing worse for animals than not to be attended to at the set time. He saw with alarm, on a nearer inspection, how much the cows were injured by neglect and carelessness. ‘He had nearly finished, when the cowherd arrived, swearing that the milking might wait, and if he found him sitting there again, he would knock him under the cow, and make him remember it all his life.

Ulric said perhaps the cowherd might be the one who would have reason to remember it. The milking must be done at the right time, and well done, or he should do it himself.

In the house they were much astonished to receive the milk so early. Freneli said it would be well if there were a new order of things ; it had long been needed.

When they were called to breakfast, Ulric was first in his place, the two maids next made their appearance, looking blowsy and sleepy,—the men-servants seemed not to be coming at all.

Freneli complained sharply. She said, ‘This waiting is most tiresome ; one can never get done in time to go to church ; of course these sluggards do not think of going themselves, but they also prevent others, who wish to attend to their religious duties.

## First Sunday in a New Place 113

Ulric asked how far it was to the church, what time he ought to start, and where he should sit?

They will open their eyes, said Freneli, if any one from the Steinbrucke goes to church; it is many years since any of the servants attended public worship. My cousin goes when he has to be godfather, and his wife twice in the year, at Christmas and at the yearly fast day. Lizabethli (or Elisi, as she likes to be called), whenever she has gay new clothes; I, when I have spoken sharply enough to get them down to breakfast in good time! As for the rest, they think no more about their souls, than our dog Ringgi! Sometimes I wonder what God will make out of such clods when they die, especially the cowherd, but it is not for me to judge. They will laugh at you, Ulric! If you go to worship, you will have something to bear!

In God's name, said Ulric, I am not ashamed of going to church on Sunday to render the worship I owe to my Maker, and if I cannot do so here, I would rather leave. Wages would be too small a consideration for which to forget my soul.

You are right, said Freneli, I wish I could go too. But I will be right angry with these lazy fellows, and then perhaps I shall be able to go next Sunday.

Why has the master nothing to say about such things? asked Ulric; my old master used to tell us when we could go, and when we must stop at home.

He says it does not matter to him, said Freneli, if only they work hard and do not rob him; and that is more than he can accomplish.

Yes, indeed, said Ulric, it needs a higher Power than his, to make men industrious and honest.

Ulric dressed himself for church, and set out carrying his Psalm-book, in spite of the mockery by which he was assailed. They said the new head-servant wished to show himself at Ueffige, and that he would expect people to stand on the benches to look at him, but there were some as handsome as he, and even handsomer! Perhaps he thought the minister would refer to him from the

## 114      Ulric, the Farm Servant

pulpit, but they would soon drive such fancies out of his head ! Whether by chance or not, Freneli stood at the door, and looked after him as he went ; she exclaimed that the minister was much more likely to refer to profligates, idlers, and liars, so that none of *them* dared to go and listen to him !

Perhaps so, said one ; but you have a bold tongue ! Shall I tell you what is in your mind ? This fellow pleases you, and you think he will take you to church some day ! That is why you take his part.

That does not concern you, said Freneli ; and disappeared, rude laughter sounding after her.      s

Ulric had plenty of company on the way, and he found many people assembled round the school-house where the service was to be held.

There is the new head-servant from the Steinbrucke ! they said to one another. They wondered how long this one would stay ; the others had soon left. If he was on good terms with the servants, Joggeli would watch him like a constable, until he could find a pretext for parting with him. If, on the other hand, he wished to introduce order in the house and farm, the servants would become his enemies, and Joggeli would think he wished to encroach on his authority ; instead of supporting him, he would annoy him as much as possible, so that he would be obliged to leave. Then, as soon as he was gone, Joggeli would do all he could to get him back, and, if he succeeded, begin the same old game over again. Joggeli was the strangest man in the world !

Every one had some absurd story to tell of the farmer of the Steinbrucke, and all advised Ulric not to put himself about, but to consider his own interest, and to feather his own nest. These ideas fermented in Ulric's mind, so that he could not fix his thoughts on the sermon. All that he had seen confirmed only too well what he now heard of Joggeli, and his position seemed to him to be so vexatious and annoying as to be quite unbearable ; he set out on his homeward way with a mind full of gloom and anxiety ; but the sun shone so

## First Sunday in a New Place 115

brightly, the snow was so pure and dazzling, and the finches hopped and flew so familiarly before him, that a home-feeling came over him, and it seemed as if his old master walked and talked by his side : he almost heard him speaking thus, Do you not remember about the two voices which accompany us through life, one urging to evil, the other persuading to good? Do you not know that the misleading voice comes from the tempter, the serpent of Paradise, and that it always puffs up those who are weak enough to listen to it, and turns them from the right path only to mock at their credulity when they are brought to humiliation and despair! Remember that a man must resist and say, Get thee behind me, Satan! How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God!

Then he thought of what the men who had come together to be edified by God's word had said to him, how they had persuaded him and puffed him up. He perceived what kind of voices these were, what meaning they had, and knew that he must absolutely close his ears against them. But it almost made him shudder to think of people who assemble to hear God's word, and to serve God, as they say, yet who serve Satan; instead of building themselves up, they pull down others into the abyss of sin. It is terrible, he thought, if people make the way to church a path to hell, and it must also be terrible for a man to possess a heart which turns the word of God into poison, and belongs to Satan, while with his body he seems to worship God.

Then he took courage again, as he felt firm ground under his feet, and blushed for his own weakness. He reflected that a man is too often like a reed shaken by the wind, and realized the necessity of prayer and watchfulness. As he thought of the state of souls that neither watch nor pray, he wondered that there was not still greater wickedness in the world.

In the afternoon, he could bear without anger the scoffs of his companions : they said he should get ready to go to school and say his catechism. After all, it was



## 116      Ulric, the Farm Servant

very convenient to have a parson amongst them : he might pray for them all, but he surely would not expect them to leave off swearing ! Ulric had never imagined such profanity and open ungodliness, or thought that any one could be persecuted in this way for simply wishing to honour God's laws. He did not know that those who clamour most for freedom of faith and of conscience, become too often the most despotic when they are themselves in power, and exercise the most pitiless tyranny, as, for instance, in the French Revolution. And what is so intolerant as open ungodliness ? it does not tolerate reverence, and it insists so much on freedom of faith and conscience, that no one must profess faith, no one must appeal to conscience ! Who does not feel the growing power of declared ungodliness, and perceive the hollowness of its professions of toleration !

After dinner, Ulric went up to his cold and gloomy bedroom, and took his Bible out of his box. The print was large and good, and the binding was handsome ; it was a parting gift from his old mistress. He opened it reverently at the first chapter, read the history of the creation, and wondered at the power and wisdom of the Creator. He thought of the boundless space which God had gemmed with myriads of stars. He thought of the earth and its beauty ; then of the magnificence of Paradise, that wonderful valley on which an untroubled peace rested, and which had, as yet, seen no passion, no disturbance. He imagined it like a heavenly Sunday, in magnificent sunshine which spread itself in all its sacredness like an invisible but glorifying carpet over the beautiful garden. He had before his eyes a heaven-reaching dark fir-tree,<sup>1</sup> with silvery dew, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He saw golden fruits gleaming amongst its dark leaves, he saw the coloured serpent glide amongst its dark branches, saw him play

<sup>1</sup> Ulric was more likely to have fancied an apple or cherry, as a rustic of any other country would : and the following fancies are above his range hitherto ;—nor does imagination ever become a leading faculty in him.

with the golden fruit, and watched his eyes sparkling with delight as he stealthily enjoyed a morsel. Those eyes beamed like two lights far into the distance, two other eyes met them with hasty steps, the young mother of the old human race approached the mysterious tree. The serpent's glossy skin shone amongst the dark leaves. He ate daintily of the luscious fruit, he coiled himself in sparkling rings on the branches of the tree, and lay rocked in sweet comfort: the young mother looked up with sparkling eyes. The serpent showed himself so luxuriously, the fruit was so fragrant: desire arose in the mother's breast. Then the serpent swayed himself nearer and nearer, rolled sportively the most beautiful fruit to the feet of the woman, and, in sweetest tones, lured the new-born desire to glad enjoyment. He praised, with flattering words, the fine shape and noble bearing of the woman, and railed bitterly against the ill-will of the All-Father Who denied her this joy, lest she should gain majesty like His own. He saw how the sweet poisoned words swelled her desire, which grew stronger and stronger, while the flattering voice supplanted the Father's forbidding word; he saw how Eve tasted in bashful curiosity, how she hastened to share the sin with Adam, how a dark mysterious cloud sank upon the valley and enveloped it in gloom. He saw a waste and barren earth, he watched our first parents in the sweat of their brow, in pain and weariness, hacking the unbroken ground—they, the first sacrifices to the misleading voice, which lures creatures from their Father and gives them misery for their reward.

So Ulric sat in his cold little room, absorbed by the sacred narrative, and his imagination placed all as vividly before him, as if it had been passing before his eyes. He forgot that he was at the Steinbrücke, and seemed to be in Paradise behind an old elder-tree, living through these scenes. Then suddenly the door was burst open, and a rough voice said: Are you there, and still pious. Ulric, although he did not suffer from weak nerves, started violently at this unexpected voice; he did not quite know

## 118      Ulric, the Farm Servant

whether it was that of the Angel Michael driving Adam out of the garden: only after a little reflection, he perceived that it was one of the men-servants. He felt stiff and cold as he stood up and turned to the man. They had all looked for him, he said, but never expected to find him in that cold hole, he must go down to the cow-herd's room, and he would soon see what they wanted him for.

This was a warmed apartment in a detached building, all the men and the two maids were assembled there. Some played with dirty cards, others lounged about the stove, and all seasoned their conversation with oaths and gross jests.

When Ulric entered they all roared at him; he must give them a treat, to wine or brandy, whichever he chose. They said every new head-servant did so, that it depended on them whether he stayed there or not, and they would soon have him out of the way if he refused them. Ulric did not quite know what to do; he neither wished to spend his money, nor to make common cause with such men, neither was he at all afraid of them; but he did not wish to seem stingy, and he thought he might be better able to insist on his other requirements, if he yielded this point.

It was arranged that they should go after supper to the inn, and those who had no time to dress themselves for church, managed to do so for this occasion; those who were too lazy to get up in right time for the worship of God, and the care of their souls, were eager to sacrifice many hours of sleep for a measure of wine. Freneli wondered when she saw the whole party in full dress and the maids hastening the supper, and she was greatly surprised and dissatisfied when she heard what they were going to do. She could not understand why Ulric had consented, she thought they were making a fool of him in some way, she feared he was already weary of his efforts after reform, and making common cause with these miscreants. She was cross at supper-time, and when Ulric asked her to go with them, she replied, hastily, that she should be

## First Sunday in a New Place 119

ashamed to be seen at an inn in such company. But when he was at the door, she said, Be on your guard, if I may advise you.

They all made up to Ulric as much as possible, and vied with each other in his praise, the carter and cowherd had never seen any one so skilful with cows and horses, and when the boy wondered if the new master-servant was equally clever in mowing, they declared that they considered themselves beaten in advance. If any one threw out a doubt it was a signal to the others to praise him still more.

Daring this talk they consumed wine very freely, and Ulric could not tell them to stop. They proceeded to advise, and told him he would be very foolish if he considered the master's interest, as Joggeli had most ill-will towards those who worked for his advantage, and respected and feared those who stood up for themselves. His own son was never so happy as when he could play him some clever trick, and there was no sense in Ulric's plaguing himself and others in his service. But if he would be reasonable, he might make a good thing of it, only he must not do as the other head-servants had done; they had wanted all for themselves, but he must share with *them*; then he might get on finely. Ulric could scarcely believe that these were the same persons who, during the preceding week, had lost no opportunity of provoking him. Happily this recollection, and Freneli's words, which occurred to him, kept him on his guard, or he would have been quite overcome by the wine, the flattery, the apparent goodwill. He thought these people were surely better than they seemed at first, and it must be possible to come to some good understanding with them.

At last it was time to close the inn, the host would not give any more wine, and the party necessarily broke up.

While Ulric, with sighs, paid the pretty long account, his guests disappeared one by one, and only the carter stayed with him. Outside, it was pitch dark, and snow was falling fast. His companion proposed to take him

## 120      Ulric, the Farm Servant

under the windows of certain young girls of his acquaintance, but he declined, saying he did not wish to get frozen for the sake of persons whom he had never seen, and he should prefer returning to the Steinbrücke as soon as possible. Then the carter begged him to go a little way round, he wondered whether the daughter of the house close by, had company or not, so Ulric did not refuse to wait for him. Scarcely was he off the road, in a little dark lane, when a club whizzed through the air, and an invisible hand dealt him one heavy blow on the back of the neck, and another on the shoulders. He grasped out quickly into the darkness, caught hold of the hand, tore the club out of it, distributed right and left some telling blows, took hold of an object which obstructed his way, flung it to a distance, and disappeared as if the earth had swallowed him.

Here and there blows sounded, then voices which said, No ! no ! stop, it's me ! Where is he ? where is he ? I don't know. Come and help me to raise the carter, he has had enough for this time. I bleed like an ox, but the confounded rascal shall pay for it ; we will run before and catch him at Thurlé and give it him well ! They ran staggering to Thurlé, but waited in vain, Ulric did not appear. At last they became uneasy about him, lest he should have fallen in a swoon, and be found in the morning frozen to death. The carter was specially concerned, not because he was less irritated than the rest against the head-servant, but because he had left the inn with him, and in a court of justice, he would be held responsible ; he cursed and swore about the blow he had received, and thought how cold it would be in the prison.

In the morning, they were all startled by Ulric's voice, calling them as usual to work. The dog lives ! How did he get home ? said the carter with an oath to the cowherd. They asked Ulric how he had returned, said they had waited for him a long time in vain ; (which was quite true !) surely he must have been paying a visit somewhere. Then his companion told what had hap-

## First Sunday in a New Place 121

pened in the narrow lane, and complained that Ulric left him in the lurch, and only took care to get off safely. Ulric replied that each must look out for himself, and he could not very well help him, when he never saw him any more. The others affected indifference or expressed regret that they were not there to help their comrades. Ulric did not enter into any explanation as to his return home, or make any remark about their various bruises. As to Freneli, she had waited anxiously for the return of the party, but when she heard Ulric come in alone, she went quietly to sleep without troubling herself as to what might have occurred.

She saw in the morning, like every one else, the lumps and bruises which told their own tale, and Ulric said to her in passing, You were right, and I thank you for your advice. But she could not hear more then, and notwithstanding all the talk about the affair, it remained a mystery which no one could penetrate. Only later, Freneli learned the facts of the case from Ulric. He told her how, having repulsed the first attack, he had withdrawn under the roof of a bakehouse, being too old for a desperate fight. There he had recognised the voices, and understood all, then he had escaped while they were occupied in getting the unfortunate carter on his legs again. He had some idea of waiting for them at Thurlé, but on second thoughts he decided to return without risking further disaster. This time he had had his eyes opened, and he knew the people he had to deal with. Freneli urged him not to be discouraged, but to persevere in right action, also she told the mistress what had happened, and advised her to look after the way in which Ulric was treated, or he would be running away when they least expected it, remarking that he was a fine fellow who had their interest at heart, and who might not perhaps be easily replaced. We will try to keep him, said the mistress, we will do all that we can, but Joggeli is very strange, not one in a thousand is right for him.

## CHAPTER XII

HOW ULRIC WINS HIS WAY IN HOUSE AND FIELD, AND  
ALSO IN HONEST HEARTS

“The man’s power is active, progressive, defensive.”

ON the following Sunday the mistress called Ulric into the stübli. Joggeli had driven off to visit his son, with Elisi, who wished to go to a ball at Munchenberg, and who had worried the tailor, the sempstress, and the shoemaker to death with vain efforts to make her beautiful for the occasion. She cried hysterically, and said there were no fashionable clothes to be got there. When she was abroad, however carelessly she dressed herself, the ladies used to say, Oh, how pretty! What an elegant figure! but there people only said, What a pale face! and You are as thin as a vine-stick!

Ulric, said the good mother, come in and have a glass of wine, and a slice of ham.

He replied that he had had plenty, and he wished for nothing more. But he should be very glad if he might make a request, and if she refused it, he would not take it amiss, because each place had its own customs. I want to know, he said, if I should be allowed in the Wohn-stube<sup>1</sup> on Sunday afternoons. I cannot be with the rest, I know too well what that leads to. I do not wish to go to the inn; and there is no other warm room where I can read a chapter in the Bible, or write a letter to my old master.

Oh certainly, certainly, she cried; Joggeli will have nothing to say against it, and Elisi will have no objection. I do not say that I should like to have the other servants all the afternoon, but you are quite different. And indeed, if you go on as you have begun, I shall be

<sup>1</sup> Living-room, the general sitting-room, of the farmhouse, in which the upper servants were allowed places when their work was done.

## How Ulric Wins his Way 123

perfectly satisfied with you, and Joggeli also, I assure you. But you must not be surprised if he does not tell you so, it is not his way, and if he is sometimes a little odd, never mind, but persevere. She asked him to set aside some corn for meal for the pigs each morning, and mind, she added, Joggeli need not know of it. He cannot refuse what is necessary to fatten the pigs; but he is always bringing it up to me, and complaining of the quantity. I use only what is needful, and as he eats pork as well as I, what I ask is no great sin.

Freneli made a curious face, when she saw Ulric enter with his writing materials. What is it? she said; what brings you here? And when he told her he had not come without the permission and sanction of the mistress, she went to her and said, I have nothing against Ulric, but Joggeli may take this amiss and be annoyed to see him making himself so much at home. I should like it to be understood that this is no doing of mine.

But what could I do, you foolish little girl? said the mistress; how could I refuse him when he asked so politely? Besides, if he is a servant, is it not much better for him to be there than to be abusing us with the cowherd?

Just so, said Freneli, but if there is any talk about it, remember it is not my fault.

Joggeli was extremely vexed when Ulric took his place in the Wohn-stube on the following Sunday, and the good old mistress had many a stinging speech to bear. But when he told her to send him away, and she replied that it was *his* place to do so, there the matter rested.

Elisi was very cross at being disturbed by Ulric's presence; she usually spent the afternoon in taking various articles of finery out of boxes and cases, airing them, and packing them up again. She spread out, over table and chairs, an assortment of corals, silk girdles, rings, gilt clasps, ribbons, handkerchiefs, embroidered chemisettes, and the like; she would hold up one after another to the light, try it on, and appeal to those present as to which suited her the best. Then she would



## 124      Ulric, the Farm Servant

arrange plans of toilette for the following Sunday, which, however, were subject to variation during the six ensuing days. Her parents never ventured to oppose her fancies, because she would cry at the slightest word of blame, go into hysterics, complain of ill-treatment, and wish to die. The doctor would be sent for, and there would be a scene, which they did not care to have repeated.

Elisi and Freneli were not attached friends. Elisi, envious of Freneli's beauty, her brilliant complexion, and all her other advantages, pretended to think her manners and appearance vulgar, and treated her disdainfully as a poor girl whom they kept, out of charity, forgetting how the whole weight of the housekeeping really rested on Freneli, and that without her good management all would have been in confusion. Freneli, on the other hand, did not trouble herself much about Elisi's haughtiness, but pitied her for her silly ways, and her want of self-control; she said a word sometimes to prevent her making herself ridiculous, but it was always taken amiss, and looked upon as jealousy.

Elisi looked sufficiently forbidding when Ulric settled himself at the table and began to read. He was in her way everywhere, he must move to another place, and still she was inconvenienced. She spread her things over the whole table, scarcely leaving room for his book. He saw all the discontented looks and the evident desire to drive him away, and he felt quite vexed as he thought to himself that he had to rough it all the week, in wind or weather, the first to labour and the last to rest, and there might surely be quiet and rest for him on a Sunday. He was on the point of expressing his displeasure, but he reflected that it would be better to take no notice unless he was directly attacked. This was a wise decision; one of Elisi's ribbons fell near his feet; he picked it up, and, struck by the colour, he said involuntarily that it was the most beautiful he had ever seen. Elisi was flattered by the remark, and unfolded some others for his admiration. He said he was not surprised that she liked to tie her pretty hair with such

## How Ulric Wins his Way 125

pretty ribbons ; and from that time he found room at the table and favour in the eyes of Elisi. She plaited her hair every Sunday afternoon in the common room, and asked Ulric's advice as to the ribbon she should select.

Ulric was a handsome man, nearly thirty years old, it is true, but fine in shape and colour. He had clear blue eyes in his head, and dark blonde curly hair upon it, a handsome nose and white teeth, which the Jews would have stolen if they had dared to take them from such a man.

Joggeli was vexed, and he visited his annoyance on Ulric, who occupied himself in clearing away the rubbish which had been accumulating for ages round the house. The mistress was greatly pleased with his convenient arrangement of wood for the kitchen, and remarked that it was a pleasure to walk round the house now that there was not something to tumble over at every step. But Joggeli grumbled at all this activity, said he had never seen such a meddlesome fellow, he liked to upset and alter everything, and he should not at all wonder if he began some fine day to clear out the stübli ! Ulric had just asked permission to clean the fruit-trees, which were in a deplorable state, from moss, manure, and dead branches. The servants quite agreed with the master that all this trouble might have been dispensed with, and complained that Ulric delighted in hunting up work in every corner, on purpose to worry them. As soon as the weather allowed, he went round the meadows, inspecting the means of irrigation, which ought to have been put into good order in the autumn. There were little water-courses to clear out, and new sluices were required. But Joggeli would not hear of the latter, the old ones had served very well for others, and they might do for him, especially as he was so clever ! Ulric might have been wishing to ruin him for his own exclusive profit !

One bright Sunday afternoon in March, Ulric told Freneli he would like to speak a word with the master if he would be so kind as to step out.

She delivered the message, and Joggeli grumbled,

## 126      Ulric, the Farm Servant

What does he want now? What new idea has he taken into his head? He is an intolerable nuisance, he gives one no peace on Sundays or work-a-days !

Ulric begged him to say how he intended to manage the spring work, and said that his old master and he had always taken a review of the labours of each season, arranging so as to be behindhand with none. If they looked forward a little, they knew what help they required and how the labourers should be employed. If, on the contrary, they did things day by day, something was sure to be neglected, and they always thought they had more time than they really had ; work was left over, and it encroached on the demands of the following season. He would therefore like to know, so as to begin in good time, what potatoes were to be set, how much hemp and flax were to be sown, how much cabbage, and what plots of ground would be most suitable for each. He added that it was a fine day, and perhaps it would be agreeable to him to go round the farm with him, and tell him his plans and wishes.

Joggeli said it would be time enough to think about all this when the snow was melted. He would soon tell him what to do, he thought nothing was gained by being in a desperate hurry ; the farm had been cultivated hitherto without such haste.

But everything has been getting worse, and it will soon bring us in nothing at all, said the wife, joining in the conversation. I would go with Ulric if I were you ; besides, a little walk in the sunshine would do you ever so much good ! Why should you delay, and give people food and wages for nothing? We have always been behindhand, and how can this be helped, if you do not plan out the work and appoint the labour suitably ?

Joggeli grumbled, but drew on his warm woollen shoes, his wife tied his cravat and put a handkerchief in his pocket ; he took his stick from behind the stove, and hobbled away full of ill-humour.

Joggeli had never, during his long life, taken a thoughtful review of his whole magnificent estate, and reflected

how it might be improved, or even maintained in good condition. He sowed what corn the time, or supply of manure, allowed, and he chose as small a piece of land as possible for potatoes, so that they had always to begin to use them sparingly at the commencement of the new year. He grudged land for anything but corn and fodder, and his wife had to beg, and almost steal, the manure required for the hemp and flax. The cultivated land was not in just proportion to the fallow-ground, everything was in a muddle, here a little plot of one thing, there a little plot of another, no order nor arrangement anywhere.

Neither did Joggeli review his staff of servants, nor arrange their labour in the working of the estate. It is true that he grumbled when they worked as little and as badly as possible : but further he did not go ; the land suffered accordingly, and the produce was less and less every year.

This is the case, unfortunately, in many estates, when the possessor does not know how to strike the balance between what the land requires, and what the owner needs, and has no idea of proportioning labour, as to kind and degree.

Ulric had a hard time of it with the old man, who tried to keep hold of each piece of land ; he grudged the manure for everything which Ulric suggested, and wished to spare it for some other purpose.

It was in vain that Ulric represented to him that he could not defer the culture of all the land to the autumn, and that there would be a plentiful supply of manure later, so that they might use what was required now. With great urgency he got a larger plot of ground for potatoes, and some for summer wheat, to be succeeded by clover. During his walk, he saw many waste pieces of ground which would supply work for many years between the seasons.

On their way home, Ulric said there was a subject on which he would like to speak, if the master would not take it amiss.

## 128      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Joggeli answered that it seemed to him he had said plenty already; but if there was more behind, he had better come out with it, and have done.

Master, he said, the stables are in a very bad state. It is absolutely necessary to make some change with the horses, or you will lose some of them, and the condition of the cows is still worse. They give very little milk, and most of them are old. I think four should be sold, and replaced by younger ones. At present we are feeding beasts without use or profit.

Oh yes, replied Joggeli, we can sell well enough, anybody can sell, but how are others to be got? In these days, every one is ready to deceive, and whom could I trust to buy cattle for me?

Oh! said Ulric, every farmer has to risk it, and any one may be taken in, but I used to buy cows and horses for my old master, and I was generally lucky.

Oh! indeed, said Joggeli, that is what you would like! Sell and buy, yes, yes, sell and buy! I am not surprised now at anything you have said about the stables! We will see! there is something strange in this!

And going into the house he complained to his wife that Ulric bothered and worried him to death. Nothing is right for him! If he could have his way, he would turn the whole farm upside down! He would like to set up both stables afresh, but I see what he is at, and I will show him he has not a fool to deal with! A fellow like that, who has not a hand's breadth of land of his own, thinks he knows better than a man whose father and grandfather were considerable farmers. That is devilish pride, and I cannot put up with it!

But when the good woman heard what were the subjects in dispute, she remarked, Farmer this, farmer the other! Some farmers would be twice as rich as they are, and their farms would produce double, if they were as skilful as many a servant!

However, the work progressed, and every one wondered to see them astir so early in the mornings at the Steinbrücke. When the Ueflige people met any of them,

## How Ulric Wins his Way 129

they remarked that they were kept strictly now, and asked them how they liked the new regulations, adding that it was very ill-done of a man to persecute his fellow-servants in that way, they ought not to submit to such a fellow, but show him that they had been there longer than he!

That will go on till he has had enough of it! said the carter one day.

When they met Joggeli, they asked him what all the hurry was for? he had perhaps a new head-servant, but what was right for one place was not for another, and they had never seen much good come of such upsetting ways. He gave too much authority to a man whom he did not know!

If they met Ulric, they changed their tone, and told him that an improvement had long been needed at Steinbrucke, but he was a fool to trouble himself over-much, he would never be able to stay with such a man, he himself was so very superior, far too good for Joggeli!

These wicked insinuations did not tend to promote mutual understanding, or to oil the wheels of labour.

Ulric's burden grew heavier and heavier; he felt as if oppressed by nightmare, walking up to the knees in clay. Joggeli disputed and objected at every turn, and when consent had been wrung from him to some simple and necessary proceeding, Ulric found its execution retarded by unwilling minds and unskilful hands. If he turned his back, nothing was done properly, he had to urge and drive continually; he thought he should never get the soil rightly prepared for the flax, and he had to make unheard-of exertions to induce the men to dig or hoe, or do any agricultural work as it ought to be done.

Country people do not understand being reproved as to their method of labour, they generally think that they do it as well as possible; and a boy, who is working for a few kreutzers a day, will set himself up, when he is told he does not know how to mow, or use a pickaxe, and declare, I have worked for many farmers, and given them satisfaction, and if I cannot work enough to suit

## 130      Ulric, the Farm Servant

you, you need only say so ; a fellow like me can always find employment !

If blame is unwelcome from the master, how much more from a servant ?

Ulric was quite conscious of this, and wished Joggeli to express his disapprobation, but the old farmer took care not to do that. He said :

If they do not please you, tell them so ; that is your business. I should be a fool to pay great wages to a head-servant, and then take upon myself his duties.

Then if the servants complained that they had been overwhelmed with work, Joggeli would say it was not his doing, Ulric might have consulted him, but he took upon him as if the farm was his own.

Ulric was greatly tried and irritated, and felt thoroughly exasperated. What could be done with a master like Joggeli ?

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the work advanced at Steinbrucke ; they were as early as other people with the spring labours, although they had planted and sown far more than usual. They had set double the quantity of potatoes, without neglecting other crops. They supported the flax by slender cords drawn backwards and forwards, and fastened to little sticks at frequent intervals, and it was so fine that the mistress went to look at it nearly every day. The people of Uefflige said, as they passed :

It is a pity that Joggeli has such a servant, it is evident that he understands his business, and Steinbrucke is becoming quite another place ; but this will not last long.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ULRIC SUCCEEDS IN OBTAINING YOUNG COWS AND NEW SERVANTS

“The relation of master and servant involves every other, and touches every condition of moral health through the State.”

ONE fine morning Joggeli said unexpectedly to Ulric that he had considered the subject, and decided that it would be better to make some change in the stable. To-morrow, he added, will be the monthly market at Berne, where one can generally buy and sell to the best advantage. So you may set out with Zingel and Star this afternoon ; go on quietly and spend the night where you like, so as to arrive early in the morning at the fair. Sell if you can, and buy two more cows. If you do not succeed, we can try at the fair at Berthond.

Ulric had not much to reply, though he thought it imprudent to go five leagues' distance with two old cows, and perhaps not be able to get them back again if they did not sell.

It was a warm May afternoon, the roads were dusty, and Ulric had trouble with the poor animals, which were unaccustomed to the heat and the hard roads. But he needed no dog to drive them ; the cows knew him, and soon began to follow his slow leading with docility and confidence. As he walked on patiently, he observed the various surrounding objects, the plantations, farm-yards, and fields ; and he had a quick eye for anything that might be usefully imitated. When his attention was not specially occupied, he reflected on the sum he ought to get for the cows ; for Joggeli had declined to name one, merely telling him to ascertain the market price, and act accordingly. He had at first refused to be satisfied with these vague instructions, but the mistress had said, Why do you hold back ? You hear that he leaves it to you. Do as well as you can, and it will be right. Joggeli had



## 132      Ulric, the Farm Servant

also given him some louis d'or, that he might be well provided for the purchase of other cows ; and now Ulric amused himself with the thought that he might return these to Joggeli intact if he could sell the old cows, and bring home fine young ones for the same money. He smiled to think how the old man would open his eyes.

Ulric went only four leagues that day, thinking it better not to tire his cows for the morrow, but he found little rest at the inn where he put up. There was a continual coming and going of honest men and of rogues, of dirty Jews and greedy Christians, of buyers and sellers, who were all eager for good bargains, and who anticipated the transactions of the morning by declaiming and chaffering in the stables, the eating-room, and even in the bedrooms. Ulric did not feel at ease amongst these people with his bag of louis d'or : he put it under his pillow, and slept little, intending to be off very early, so as to escape the Jews who had beset him during the evening.

The morning was magnificent, the meadow flowers, bright with dew, filled the air with their perfume, and Ulric walked on with a light heart to meet the events of the coming day.

When he had proceeded a little way, he was joined by a tall thin man, who immediately began to bargain for the cows. He did not let him rest until he had sold them to him, paying, in Ulric's estimation, at least two louis d'or too much. The man drove away the cows, and was seen no more. Ulric entered Berne with the money in his pocket ; he feared he might have acted with precipitation, but when he found how cattle were selling, he thought he had been in luck. He waited at the upper gate, and watched the animals as they were driven in from the rich communes beyond Berne and from the canton of Fribourg. He was at once struck by a young cow, of fine build, thin certainly, but he thought, "Here would be a good investment." She was led by a little man who looked as if he lived outside the town

## Young Cows and New Servants 133

and was ill at ease in this scene of noise and confusion. When he saw Ulric examining his cow with great care, he said :

You have no occasion to look ; you will find no blemish. I have been obliged half the winter to fodder with straw ; I did not wish to sell, and people like us cannot buy hay. I depended on the spring grass, but if we use it all, there will be none for hay, so I have made up my mind to part with this poor beast. My father kept three cows, and I have tried to keep five, for the sake of the manure ; we never have sufficient.

He did not know, poor little man, that two well-kept cows give more milk and more manure, than four badly fed and ill-cared for. He almost cried at the necessity of parting with his cow ; and Ulric had not the heart to drive a very hard bargain, as he might have done, for no one came to bid against him. Still he bought her cheap ; the little man was satisfied, wished him good luck with the cow, and looked after her with tears in his eyes.

Later, Ulric bought another, with fine hair and light horns, broad in the back, small in the head, narrow in the breast ; thus uniting all the qualifications of a good milch cow.

He felt as gay as a lark as he drove his cattle through Berne gate soon after ten o'clock, for at the end of the transaction he had three new thalers remaining from the first sale.

How astonished Joggeli and the cowherd would be, he thought. They would certainly bring up to him the leanness of the first cow, but he should just let them talk until calving time, and then, if he did not spare salt, and if he gave her some draughts which would prevent her suffering from the change of food, they would see what a fine beast she would become. He constantly looked at the three new thalers which he held caressingly in his hand, and ended by thinking that, after all, they belonged to him, for they had been earned by his own prudence in selling and buying. Then many considerations came

## 134      Ulric, the Farm Servant

in to support this idea. Had he not spent many a batz in Joggeli's service? and these were never counted up. Would his shoes have worn out so quickly if he had been less active in his interest? Yet he had received no kreutzer beyond his wages, as all the drink-money had gone to the cowherd and the carter, and was it not extremely unjust that he, who had all the trouble and responsibility, should never reap the smallest advantage? So, if he kept the three new thalers, the master would have no room for complaint, but might be thankful that he had his interest so much at heart, without demanding larger compensation. He would not make the bought cows appear any dearer, he would count so much less for those he had sold, and no one would know anything about it. They had been too dear, the purchaser was a stranger, and there had been no witness of the transaction. But when he thought his reasoning most satisfactory, an uncomfortable feeling came over him, and his conscience told him that he was contemplating a dishonest action. Was not this a suggestion of the devil, a fine cloak for a piece of roguery? He remembered a similar occasion, when he was much younger and less mature in character; he resisted the temptation, and held fast his integrity. Then he determined to maintain his honesty, and thus to preserve the right of directing others with full consciousness of uprightness, for he knew that if he once allowed himself in unfaithfulness, he could not be the same in his influence on others, he could not require of them that rectitude in which he himself had failed. And if the affair became known, what disgrace would overwhelm him! How his fellow-servants would triumph in his shame. Besides, how could he possibly pray to God, his Father, with childlike confidence, if he had weighed down his soul by so guilty an action?

He put away the three new thalers into his pocket, and relieved by his decision, he cheerfully whistled a tune until he came to an inn. He placed his cows in the shade, got some refreshment, and let the heat of the

## Young Cows and New Servants 135

day pass. He arrived at home very early, certainly much earlier than was expected.

Joggeli would not show too much satisfaction with his purchases. All depends on the price, he said. One can never tell how such lean animals may turn out.

Ulric was called into the stübli, and he rendered an exact account of all that had passed.

The master listened with a singular air. He approved of his good bargains, but remarked that he might have done better if he had driven the cows on to Berne; then he said he must divide his drink-money, which he had honestly laid on the table, with the cowherd, and deduct his expenses from the other half.

To this Ulric replied that he did not understand it in that way; such expenses were always at the masters' charge. At that rate, said the old miser, they do not profit much by sending their cattle to distant fairs. Then he paid, with a bad grace, the small sum claimed by Ulric, who had been very moderate at the inns.

You are an ill-guided man, said the wife, when Ulric had gone out. He deserves a new thaler, and you try to cheat him out of his drink-money. You spoil all your servants; they can have no pleasure in serving you well and zealously. Do you not think, then, that Ulric deserves credit for a good sale?

No, indeed! I sent a man who bought the cows from him on my account! I wished to know whether he would deceive me or not.

What a detestable action! said the wife, and I believe you are disappointed not to find him a rogue. Instead of thanking God, who has given you a treasure of a servant, you try to ruin the poor fellow. But take care; if he ever discovers a trick of this sort, he will throw up his place in a moment, and leave you to get out of your difficulties as best you may.

Shortly afterwards, Ulric told the master it was, in his opinion, time to begin haymaking, and there was no reason for deferring it.

You give one no peace whatever, said Joggeli. You

## 136      Ulric, the Farm Servant

are always pushing and driving. No one has begun to move yet, and I see no reason why I should be the first.

Oh, said Ulric, we have the most grass to cut, and if we do not begin betimes, we shall be behind everybody. When people are once behindhand, they cannot recover the lost ground. It is just like a military march : the hindmost have to hurry to keep up because, if they delay just a little, they never overtake the rest. And if a man is behindhand with money, it is hard indeed for him to get straight again.

Joggeli objected and opposed, but all in vain. \* This time he had to be the first in the neighbourhood to cut grass.

Ulric had been accustomed to work with good tools, but when he examined those at Steinbrucke, he found them in the worst order. There was not one tolerable scythe.

Joggeli maintained that he had bought several the preceding year, and rakes and forks in abundance. He did not know where they had all gone to, and if they had been stolen, he should be a fool to be always buying new ones ! As, however, it was impossible to mow without scythes, and to make hay without forks and rakes, he had to change his mind ; but he bought the cheapest he could get. Every one knows what bad economy it is to buy cheap tools.

Ulric purchased a scythe with his own money, but when he made any observations on the mowing of the other men, they said he should furnish them with better scythes, and then he might talk. He had been in the habit of commencing mowing at three o'clock in the morning, but there they let him begin alone, and arrived at four o'clock at the earliest. The cowherd and groom would not help to mow ; when they joined the rest they were impudent to Ulric, offering to teach him to use a scythe, until he asserted his mastership, and left them ten paces behind. When the servants were assembled, the day-labourers had not arrived ; they came with

## Young Cows and New Servants 137

various excuses—one had to do some mowing for himself, another to get his scythe fastened, a third to help his wife. They did scarcely any work before breakfast, but they thought it unnecessary for the master to know this, and they expected to be paid for the whole day.

Ulric could not have believed the difference between mowing from three to ten in the morning with ten active men, who had good tools and good will, and with ten lazy ones, who stopped on the slightest pretext, saying that what was not done to-day could be done to-morrow. He thought they must be under some evil spell, and they complained of his intolerable tyranny. But if his patience was tried in the morning, still greater exasperations awaited him in the afternoon. He superintended the sharpening of the scythes, and returned to the meadow with the waggon, only to find all work abandoned; the hay had not been even turned, so precious time had to be lost before loading. If, on the contrary, he stayed in the meadow, the waggon never arrived, and he had to wait also, and the men enjoyed doing so with folded arms. When he sent a party of workers to put the hay in the barn, they stayed there, and he had to go and do the unloading himself, if he ever wished to see the waggon again. In the evening he could get no one to do anything; they were all too busy or too tired. The women of the house were truly sorry for him, but their pity did not much avail, and he felt that all this opposition was malicious and premeditated. Joggeli looked on, not merely with indifference, but with mischievous pleasure, and when his wife wanted him to interfere, and said that Ulric could not manage the servants while they all combined against him, he rejoined,

Oh! it is just as well that he should be taken down a peg; if all went smoothly, he would hold his head so high that the sun, moon, and stars would have to make room for him.

The summer of that year was marked by very variable weather; a fine day would be succeeded by a wet one, so that it was even more necessary than usual to be

## 138      Ulric, the Farm Servant

guided by the wisdom of the proverb which says, Make hay while the sun shines. An experienced farmer knows how to make up for bad weather by redoubled activity during the fine intervals, and Ulric would have been quite equal to the occasion if he had not been hindered on every side. He wrote one Sunday to his old master :

I cannot bear it any longer. I am so angry that I cannot eat,<sup>1</sup> I feel as if each mouthful would choke me, and I can hardly refrain from laying hands on these rascals. We have still a great deal of grass to cut, and we ought to carry a quantity of hay to-morrow. If the men go on as they did last week, and the master does nothing but chuckle over it, I will throw it all up, and return to you. I lead the life of a dog ! It is intolerable to have not only the servants, but the master, against me. The mistress means very well, but she cannot do much ; if she had the management, things would go otherwise.

On the Monday morning there was bright sunshine, but there was a prospect of a storm before the evening. Ulric left off mowing at eight o'clock, so as to get the hay dry as quickly as possible, and two loads were carried before midday. At dinner Ulric said they need not be in a hurry to prepare the evening meal, for there was a great deal to be done, and they could not leave off work until late. But the zeal of the servants was not equal to this added strain. As soon as Ulric turned his back, some went up to each other and began to talk ; others thought absolute repose necessary. The cowherd did not appear at all ; the carter drove as if he had two snails to his waggon instead of a pair of good horses, and when Ulric told him that he ought to go faster, he upset a load into the brook, so that they had to lose quite an hour in getting it up again. When Ulric remarked that he must be blind to throw a load over on a road like that, he retorted that it was his own fault for hurrying and urging, and that as long as such a tyrant was there, nothing would go right. ' If he did not like

<sup>1</sup> Gotthelf must have had some bitter fits of anger himself, to know that sickness. Scott never seems to have had the sensation.

## Young Cows and New Servants 139

his way of driving, he might drive himself. He would not touch the whip again. With these words, he flung it to Ulric, and laid himself comfortably down on a heap of hay. Ulric, boiling with anger, had already seized the whip by the thin end, in order to try what summary justice would do, but he bethought himself, and drove the waggon home without speaking a word.

The mistress was occupied in preparing the evening meal, when she saw him driving the waggon; and she inquired the reason why, with some feeling of anxious presentiment, from Freneli, who had gone on first.

Question him yourself, Cousin, said Freneli; there has been a great quarrel with the servants, and if the master does not take Ulric's part this time, the affair will end badly.

The mistress immediately hastened out to meet the head-servant, and asked him what had happened.

Where is the master? he inquired, with pale and trembling lips. He must come out. I have something to say to him immediately.

Good heavens! how you look! said she. Come into the house. He is there. Some one will hold the horses.

She hastened to offer him a cup of coffee, which she had been keeping hot for Freneli, and said, Tell me quickly what is the matter.

Mistress, I will leave, and that immediately. I will not bear this any longer! I will hand the whip to the master, have my wages, and be off to-day! I will not kill myself for others, and be laughed at for my pains.

But who thinks of laughing at you?

Just the master himself, who is no master, or he would understand his own duty and interest.

And what is my duty and my interest? said Joggeli, who entered at the moment.

I want my wages. I am going, said Ulric abruptly.

You have no reason to leave. You will surely stay?

No, master. I will not stay, and I have good reasons. You appointed me head-servant, yet you do not support



## 140      Ulric, the Farm Servant

my authority ; you do not give orders yourself, and I cannot give them in your place, so the consequence is, that the men all do as they like. An upper servant is quite useless here ; you made conditions which you have not kept. I will stay no longer.

But what do you complain of ? asked Joggeli, already rather crestfallen.

I have told you,—just because you are no master. If you had been a real master, you would have come to-day to direct the work ; you would have urged and commanded, or at least told the workpeople to hurry themselves. But, instead of that, you left me to stand alone, though you knew very well how things were,—that the cowherd would not leave the house, and the carter thought it a fine joke to oppose and annoy me. That is why I intend to leave.

You are too hasty. I cannot be everywhere at once, and if you had asked me, I would have said a word, but when a man has so many things to think of, as I have, he cannot always remember everything !

All that is very fine, said Ulric, but I want my money.

See, Ulric, said the wife, take another cup of coffee, and bethink yourself. You suit us exactly, and we have never found fault with you. On the contrary, Freneli and I have said to one another many a time, If he goes on in this way, the farm will soon be brought into order again.

No good order is possible so long as the cowherd and the carter are here, and I will not stay with them ; either they must leave, or I.

Oh, said Joggeli, when people are too hasty, they are often unjust ; you will think better of it by morning, and we will consider about it to-morrow.

It is considered as far as I am concerned, said Ulric. I have borne too much already. You will give them their wages to-day, or me mine.

I will not be dictated to in this way, said Joggeli.

I do not wish to dictate to you. The choice remains with you.

## Young Cows and New Servants 141

I should soon decide if I were you, said the mistress. There is no need to hesitate.

Yes, yes, but how can we replace two servants at this season, when all hands are busy? It cannot be done.

If this is the only obstacle, said Ulric, it can be surmounted. If those fellows are once out of the way, I can milk and drive, and undertake their other duties, for the time being; and soon there will be no lack of servants. But do as you please. I am well satisfied to leave. I wrote to my old master yesterday to tell him that he would soon see me back again.

This last argument was decisive, and Joggeli agreed to dismiss the cowherd and carter. They knew the old man well, and thought he had sent for them merely to give them a lecture, so they arrived with the most threatening and defiant air which they were able to assume. When he began to speak smoothly of giving them their wages, they said that would suit them exactly, but he would soon see how he could get on when Ulric had worried all the servants out of their places. He had only to pay down their money; they should be delighted to leave; they might have had higher wages long since. Joggeli was beginning to falter, when his wife (who had stayed near him to push on the waggon in case it stuck fast) said, Pay them, then, Joggeli. As they wish for their wages, take them at their word. I shall be glad to have the two rascals out of my sight. I hope they will go to-day. Upon this they both declared that they would not stop an hour longer in such a place; they should be glad if the haymaking was about until Martinmas; the sooner they could get away the better. So Joggeli counted out their wages, they were paid and discharged.

In the meantime the wind began to rise; the clouds were driven rapidly through the sky; black vapours raised themselves slowly along the horizon, like the future of a sorrowful soul; the birds sought the bushes; the fish jumped at the flies; the dust and hay were carried into the air by the whirling hurricane. Outside

## 142      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Ulric exerted himself to get in as much hay as possible ; indoors the two dismissed servants counted their money, and laughed scornfully, asking if Joggeli was not going out to lend a hand to the haymakers ! The storm increased in violence ; gusts of wind blew the hay out of the rakes, and agitated the manes of the horses ;<sup>1</sup> the fair rakers, with aprons well filled, fled like fawns before a huntsman. Look out, cried a voice, and the horses were in motion, pursued by men with forks well charged with hay, which was received by the loader, who was on his knees, with extended arms, at the top of the waggon. Large drops of rain began to fall. One of the men seized the cover ; it was on the load in a trice, and fastened down with thick ropes. The black clouds crackled ; the dust was driven before the rain. The powerful horses, guided by Ulric's sure hand, stepped out well and willingly, and the load was soon safe under the sheltering barn. The haymakers ran after, with their forks on their shoulders ; the girls, with their aprons 'over their heads, brought up the rear, and amid laughter and jokes, took refuge under the overhanging roof. Then the rain poured down in torrents ; the flashes of lightning illuminated the darkness of the barn ; the thunder rolled over the house. They all regarded this spectacle with a solemn awe. The Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice. But when they were called to supper, the storm had begun to abate ; the rain fell more gently ; the thunder rumbled further off : then the cowherd and the groom came down in their Sunday clothes to say good-bye to their friends, who asked in much astonishment what was the matter. They told them to ask Ulric, he was master now, and they preferred leaving to being under such a fellow ; they would not stay for any money. They gave their boxes in charge until they should send for them, foretold that the rest would not stop long after them, and went forth like two birds of the night, despising the offered supper. Ulric

<sup>1</sup> These two and the following lines are worth as many pages of common description.

## Young Cows and New Servants 143

did not show himself at that moment, but when he heard of their departure, he felt relieved of an immense weight, and the added labour was quite a pleasure. The drags on the wheels were removed. The work advanced marvellously, and the head-servant might have been two or three men at once. He mowed, and attended to the stables; he sharpened most of the scythes; in fact, he was here, there, and everywhere. They saw now what an intelligent man could do—he combined the labours of others, so that they could act helpfully and in unison. Under him the boy became as useful as a man. An evil spirit seemed to have been expelled; the remaining servants and day-labourers were docile and willing; those who had been most deeply implicated in the plot against Ulric showed themselves the most zealous in work, since they had witnessed the disastrous result of ill-doing. They even told Ulric what the cowherd and carter had said and done and thought against him; and assured him that they had tried to dissuade them, being convinced that they would come to a bad end.

These two personages had a merry time of it at a neighbouring inn, boasted loudly of what they had done, enjoyed the thought of the inconvenience their absence would cause at Steinbrücke, and felt persuaded that they could never get on there without them. One day passed, then a second, and a third, and they heard nothing; no one asked after them; all was quiet and busy at Steinbrücke; and they began to feel uneasy. They tried showing themselves at a distance to their former friends, but these did not appear to see them. This was serious. They had fully expected to be sent for and asked to return, and they had even considered what conditions they should make!

Then, at last, the groom sent a secret message to Joggeli, giving it to be understood that he would willingly go back; the cowherd had stirred him up, and been to blame for all, but now he saw his mistake, and he was very sorry for what had passed. The cowherd sent a similar message to Ulric, promising him a new

## 144      Ulric, the Farm Servant

thaler if he managed to get him back into his old place ; it had all been the fault of the groom—if he had not been there, he should never have acted so badly, and he could tell Ulric dreadful things about him.

While Ulric was scythe sharpening, Joggeli came to him and said, The groom is willing to come back, he says he was not to blame, and it might be as well to take him. He knows the ways of the house, and another would have to learn them.

Do as you will, said Ulric, but I will have nothing more to do with him. The cowherd has sent to me promising me a new thaler if I will give him a good word, and *he* lays all the blame on the groom. One is as bad as the other. You might choose blindfold, and, as surely as either is taken back, contention and disorder will recommence.

Well ! so let it be, said Joggeli, but how shall we do if you find none to suit you ? We cannot go on any longer in this way. The farm must be properly worked.

It seems to me, said Ulric, that it has been quite as well worked since those two men went, the haymaking is done early in spite of the bad weather, and people say it has not been so long about as it used to be. I do not see that anything has been neglected.

You are like a powder-barrel, Ulric ; you flare up in a moment.

No, said Ulric, but when I have worked so that nothing is behindhand, it makes me angry to hear you talk as if we could not get on without those two men.

Oh ! I did not say that, said Joggeli—understand me rightly—but I think they ought to be replaced.

Certainly, said Ulric. I supposed that you were on the look-out for others.

No, said Joggeli. I thought you would find others, as these did not suit you.

I am a servant myself, master, said Ulric, it is not my place to hire other servants, and you would think I was encroaching on your rights ; but if you have no objection, I should like to say something to you.

## Young Cows and New Servants 145

Say on, said Joggeli. You do not generally wait for my leave to speak.

Then Ulric represented to the old man, with as much respect as possible, the serious loss and inconvenience resulting from the disorder which had reigned amongst his farm-servants. You see, he added, that I am willing to do all I can to restore the farm to its former condition, but in order to accomplish this, there must be a master whom all are bound to obey. If you will direct, I desire nothing better, but if not, it is absolutely necessary that another should do so in your name, and only on this condition can I remain here.

Direct them, said Joggeli. I have often told you that is your business.

But you have never told the others that they must obey, rejoined Ulric.

Bah! that is only your fancy, said Joggeli. Besides, one could not at first trust everything to a stranger. Give as many orders as you like; only don't give my wife orders about her cooking.

I do not desire that, master, said Ulric, but one must be allowed to give orders to the carter and the cowherd as to what they are to do, and how they must do it. If each man follows his own plan, at the back of the house one is in Emmenthal, at the front of the house in the Oberland, close by in Seeland, and in disorder everywhere.

Joggeli submitted to his fate. Two men were engaged with the understanding that they were to obey the head-servant. The old ones went away at last, cursing, not unjustly, the falseness of the world. While they were at Steinbrucke every one had flattered and praised them; they expected to be snapped up as soon as they were at liberty, but no one wanted them, and they sought in vain for places in the neighbourhood.

# 146      Ulric, the Farm Servant

## CHAPTER XIV

### HOW A FATHER AND SON BRING VARIOUS ARTS TO BEAR UPON A SERVANT

“All work must be done at last, not in a disorderly, scrambling, doggish way, but in an ordered, soldierly, human way—a lawful or ‘loyal’ way.”

So all pulled together at Steinbrucke, and the mother said life was quite another thing, and it was long since she had been so pleased and satisfied. The quantity of milk was really astonishing. The same cows gave half as much again; formerly they had seemed to be dry on purpose to vex her at the time of any special need. And what can be done without milk? Now she could venture to look forward to the harvest. The butter would not be all used up at the feast.

Joggeli, on the contrary, was by no means satisfied. He seemed to have nothing more to say in his own house. He often walked restlessly about the farm and the stables in search of some pretext for grumbling, at least to his wife. Before Ulric he took care to speak low, but he could not refrain from a few spiteful words, and he indulged himself occasionally so far as to give orders contrary to those of his head-servant.

One day he was walking discontentedly round a corn-field, which Ulric had not yet taken in hand, feeling vexed that it could look so bad, and that he could not blame him for it, when the miller went and asked him if he would let him have thirty measures of his first-ripe corn. Their bargain was soon concluded, after which Joggeli requested the miller to oblige him by offering Ulric a new thaler if he would undertake to get the corn for him at a lower price. I should like to know what he will do, he said. It is not wise to hand over everything. One may trust too far, and then be deceived. The miller promised, and he went one evening to Ulric just

as he was reading a letter from his old master, advising him to persevere, and to speak openly and civilly to Joggeli. He said that would be far better than keeping his anger pent up, to break out some day more violently than he would wish. He was no girl; he need not die of vexation or grief. He must be of good courage. Every one had his burden in life, and the sooner he accustomed himself to bear it with a good grace, the lighter it would appear. He must not try to do everything at once, and if he decided to remain with Joggeli, he must insist on the discharge of those persons who would not be led. Then came greetings, and assurances that he would be heartily welcome; they all missed him.

While he was engrossed by this letter, the miller arrived in a casual manner, and sitting down beside him, began to talk of the improvement which he was accomplishing in Joggeli's farm, praising the manure heap and the grass, and saying all that was likely to please and gratify him. After this long preamble, he came to the corn which he wished to buy, and remarked that the farmer was a strange man to do business with; at first he wanted an excessive price for his corn, and then, when he was tired of keeping it, he would let it go for half its value. He (the miller) did not wish to wait, and yet he did not want to pay too much, so that, knowing that whatever Ulric did was right for his master, he had come to ask him to get it for him at ninety batzen a measure: it was too much, certainly, but he wanted the corn without delay, and he would not mind giving him one or two new thalers of drink-money. Ulric said that he did not meddle with these matters; he must speak to Joggeli himself. But the miller, passing from words to action, tried to slip a new thaler into his hand. Ulric stood up, and declared passionately that he must be a dishonest man, or he would not wish to make others dishonest; he supposed he would himself do anything for money, and so he judged of others! But he would not charge his conscience with a bad



## 148      Ulric, the Farm Servant

action to oblige a miller, even though he made him a present of all the corn which he had stolen from farmers in his whole lifetime. Then the miller began to get warm also, and said there were some farmers who were worse even than millers, and if he had tried to tempt Ulric, it had been for another; he had not to reproach himself with ever wishing to make any one bad.

Who could prompt you to such an action? asked Ulric.

I think a sharp fellow like you can pretty well guess.

What! Could it be the master?

I say nothing, answered the miller.

Then a passion of anger seized Ulric; he could hardly draw his breath; scalding tears came to his eyes; he clenched his fists, and cried, So that is it! and rushed up to his little chamber. The miller slipped round to the kitchen, and told the mistress what had happened, remarking that this was a bad business, and she must see after the head-servant, and try to make it up with him. She sent Freneli to see what he was doing, while she went to her husband, and thus accosted him:

You are indeed a most abominable man. Was not once enough for you? You will go on until you have driven away the best servant we could possibly meet with.

You should not trust any one too much, said Joggeli; every one wants looking after, and may change from one day to another. Men always try a horse, and I do not see why a man should not be tried also, when so much more depends upon him. If Ulric had taken the thaler, I should not have sent him away, but I should have known what degree of confidence he deserved.

But, Joggeli, do you think that a fine, honest fellow will stay with a master who is laying snares for him at every turn, or that he can be content in a place where people have a bad opinion of him?

You are still a child, old wife, said Joggeli. People think now-a-days of profit, and not of opinion. I do not know where Ulric would make such high wages.

You may be quite sure that he will think twice before leaving.

In the meantime Freneli had gone upstairs, and found Ulric packing his things, while great drops fell from his cheeks, and he made from time to time a half-suppressed exclamation. Freneli stepped in and said, What are you doing? What is the matter?

Ulric was so full of indignation that he made no reply, until Freneli went nearer, and repeated her questions. Then he answered, I am going to leave.

Do not, said she; it is not worth your while to mind this affair. You must take the cousin as he is.

But Ulric said he had not been accustomed to such treatment; it was altogether new to him. No wages would pay him for working himself to death for his master's advantage, when, after all, he tried to make a rascal of him; and he had never once said that he was satisfied.

You only fare like others, said Freneli. I manage all the housekeeping; he gives me no wages; and he would say that he has me here out of charity! If it were not for the mistress, who knows what I should have done before now? But listen, and do not be so vexed. You are on good terms with every one, and all work smoothly and pleasantly together. Only think how delighted the late groom and cowherd would be if you were to go away; they would spread a report far and wide that you had been driven off at last. Whatever you may say, people always believe the evil.

They may for me, said Ulric; it does not matter. I will not stay any longer.

Then the difficult breathing and languid step of the old mistress were heard on the stairs. She was anxious for an explanation, so she went herself to see the position of affairs.

It is well you have come, cousin, said Freneli; he will not be persuaded; he is determined to leave.

Oh no! you must not leave us, said the housewife. What have we done to grieve you?

## 150      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Oh, *you* have done nothing, said Ulric ; but I cannot live with the master ; he mistrusts me continually, and tries to make a villain of me ; he will not rest until he injures my character. I will not stay, by —.

Do not swear, Ulric, said the mother quickly. Consider. He is an old man ; one must have patience with him ; some day you will, perhaps, be glad of consideration yourself. I promise you that this shall not happen again ; and if we can do anything to please you in any way, you have only to speak. ¶

You might promise for long enough. I know very well that you would not do such a thing, but you cannot answer for your husband.

Yes, I can, if it is necessary. I can make him fear me sometimes. He shall come himself and promise that he will in future leave off laying traps and snares. Freneli, go and tell him to come up here.

The mission was a difficult one. Joggeli at first answered that he had never gone on his knees to a servant yet. If Ulric would go, he must ; he would not stop him by kneeling to him and begging his pardon.

But, cousin, you have been quite mad against Ulric. If you were so to me, I should run away.

You would soon come back again if no one ran after you, said Joggeli.

That is a question, said Freneli ; but *he* would not, and then what would become of the harvest ?

Well, tell the old woman she is to give him good words, and press a couple of batzen into his hand, and he will soon come round.

She has already encouraged him many times to stay, but this time she can do nothing with him. Ulric will most certainly leave unless you promise him that such a thing shall never happen again. You would see then how the harvest would be got in, while now the work runs as smoothly as possible.

If he were to go, you would be the most grieved, said Joggeli. Then you and he could not have an under-

standing with each other to manage everything in your own way.

I have no understanding with any one, said Freneli. You must be a very worthless man yourself to mistrust every one else. But do as you will, as far as I am concerned. What is Ulric to me? and what is it to me if your corn is left standing in the fields?

With these words Freneli disappeared, and it was in vain that the old man called after her. Then he took his stick, went slowly up the stairs, and called his wife. As she gave no answer, he went nearer to Ulric's room, until she declared to him that he must go up, or no good could be done. Joggeli said it was a great noise about nothing. He could not understand what he had to do there, or why Ulric was so angry. He had had no bad intention, and no one could deny his right to watch those about him.

But you have every reason to believe in Ulric's honesty, said his wife.

Joggeli said he had not much opinion of believing; he liked certainty. When any one had been deceived as he had, and when all had conspired against him, he might surely be on his guard, and keep his eyes open.

That is why I cannot remain, said Ulric. You would never trust me, and I cannot possibly stay in a place where people have no confidence in each other.

You would have to go a long way, then, before you would find a place to your mind, said Joggeli. Do not be so foolish. I will not tempt you any more—so much I will say—but you must not suppose that I shall not use my eyes; men have always need to fear, because the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

This time you have been the devil, seeking to devour me, and that was ill done of you, said Ulric.

Well, I have told you that I will not do it any more; and you should be satisfied. I myself am satisfied. I should not like a new head-servant; it would be difficult to find one better than you. People are worth nothing

## 152      Ulric, the Farm Servant

now-a-days ; and if you pay a man his weight in gold, he is not all you want.

Ah ! said his wife, we are all poor sinners ; and you are also no angel. Give your hand, and let the matter end. Ulric, you have heard my husband ; now come down ; I have coffee prepared, and you will take some with us ; people get better satisfied and more at ease when they can eat and drink together, especially a cup of coffee.

Ulric thought of his master's letter, agreed, and seemed content. Joggeli pretended to be so ; but he said in his heart, 'They all hold together far too much. I must keep a brisk look-out, or I shall be betrayed and ruined.'

Harvest-time came, with its pressing demands. This season puts the capacity of the farmer to the test, so many things have to be attended to all at once without interfering with the principal work. The cherries are ripe, the flax and the hemp require attention, while the corn receives due care, as the most important produce. The good mother had always been in a fever during harvest-time. No one gathered the cherries : they were left to the birds ; the hemp was allowed to become over-ripe ; they forgot to pull the flax, or else to spread and turn it. The servants had time for nothing, though they could spend half a day at once in looking about and considering what they should do next.

But things were changed by Ulric's forethought. All was done with order and facility, and the mistress was glad at heart to see the basketfuls of cherries which were continually brought in, and the hemp and flax spread out in fine layers, for they were very particular not to take the flax into the shade before the seeds were well separated from it.

Joggeli, on the contrary, stepped about everywhere uneasily like a troubled spirit ; he thought only of the corn, and could not understand how it could fail to suffer while the other produce was so diligently gathered in. But it was not late after all ! The harvest feast at

Steinbrucke fell on the same Saturday as in the neighbouring farms; formerly it had been a week or a fortnight later. But Joggeli had his notions about this also. He was afraid people would think he had not been able to sow as much corn if he got done so soon, because, as he remarked, short hair is sooner brushed than long. But the cause of the change was very well known.

## CHAPTER XV

## HOW THEY FEAST, YET SOME ARE NOT SATISFIED

“We are to poison no man’s pottage, mental or real.”

THE harvest feast is one of the most important events in Swiss country life. A day on which wine and meat and cakes are in profusion and variety, is it not a foretaste of the millennium to poor day-labourers and their families, who never see a joint of meat, and rarely have a plentiful supply of potatoes?<sup>1</sup> They rejoice in the thought of it through all the year, and sigh over it mournfully when it is past. The most miserly farmers are lavish on that day, and if they grudge the plentiful supplies, they take care not to seem to do so, for this custom is held sacred in the whole country; it is founded on religious or, it may be, a superstitious idea—it is regarded as a Christian sacrifice.

The Giver of all good has again opened His hand, and filled all things living with plenteousness. He has blessed the industry of the farmer, and given him the fruits of the earth in rich abundance. The most callous feel some sentiment of thankfulness towards God, and understand that they owe to Him some offering as an

<sup>1</sup> If this be so in a country as rich and well farmed as Switzerland, what can we expect in Ireland? The fact is, no European Government,—and least of all the English,—have yet learnt the primary laws of wisdom and justice in the distribution of food.

## 154      Ulric, the Farm Servant

expression of their gratitude. Then even the miser gives food for a day and a night to his sons and his daughters, his men-servants and maid-servants, and the stranger who is within his gates, as much as their heart desires. Where the good old hospitable feeling prevails, they invite, not only those who have laboured in the harvest, but also those who have done any work in the house during the year.

When the sacrifice is consummated, the miser gathers up the fragments, uses them carefully, and closes his kitchen and cellar for another year.

A farmer may well rejoice on such a day. His daily bread is sure; he can provide for the wants of his children; his wife can give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. He sits down in the midst of plenty, and it is right that he should rejoice. But should food and drink be the only sacrifice offered to God? Has He not a claim to some further sign of gratitude? He has for a whole year watched over the fruits of the earth, which now are gathered in; and shall one day suffice for the thankfulness due to the Creator? Should not habitual thanksgiving be the result of so much bounty? Should there not be a lasting feeling of gratitude towards the great Giver, who ever sees our thoughts and watches over our ways, by whom the hairs of our head are all numbered? Should we not ever remember that we have the poor always with us, and not only at the harvest feast?

This feast had always been kept in the most liberal manner at the Steinbrucke, nothing was spared, and Lake Murten<sup>1</sup> might have been filled with the butter that had been used on successive occasions. The son of the family honoured the repast with his presence; he left his inn at Freuligen, and brought his wife and children to partake of the good cheer at his father's house. He did his best to assume the air of a man of consideration. He set his hat on one side, put his hands in his pockets, or crossed his arms with a defiant air; he looked ready

<sup>1</sup> The Lake of Morat.

to devour the four children of Haimon<sup>1</sup> and their horse Bayard, and said to all in French, Bunschur ! bunschur ! (Bon jour !). In that part of Switzerland, German is the language used, and it is considered very pretentious to introduce French words in conversation. His wife was an over-dressed doll, she said, Merci ! and looked like a plant which had grown in the shade. She had been an heiress, and quite above working ! Her fine dress looked as if it was hung on a post. She behaved in a rude, domineering manner, while apeing what she called gentility, but the vulgarest people were good enough for her if they would listen while she boasted of her riches. She had three children, in whom the qualities of father and mother were combined. They were absurdly dressed, badly brought up, and thoroughly ill-behaved. Sometimes it was Edward who gave a terrific yell, sometimes Rudolph or Caroline. The father would say, Who is making the children cry ? I won't have it ! and the mother would give them figs and raisins to quiet them. When these were finished, they would all make ugly faces and begin to bawl together ; the noise may be imagined ! Then the father would swear at the mother for not being better provided, and assure the children that at the next shop he would give them all that they wanted.

Joggeli was always seized with secret terror at the arrival of this family, and with good reason ; however, he was outwardly kind to them ; and the excellent mother, though feeling for her son and his children a sincere affection, and complaining sometimes that they were such strangers, yet felt relieved when they drove away, because at the end of two days she did not know what to give them to eat, they were so difficult to please. Elisi, on the contrary, was very glad when they came, as her tastes resembled those of Trini, or Trinette (short for

<sup>1</sup> "Heroes of one of the romances of the cycle of Charles the Great, entitled *Renault de Montaubon ; ou, Ses Quatres Fils Aymon*. The horse Bayard was of marvellous strength and swiftness, and carried all four brothers at once."



## 156      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Katherine). The two sisters-in-law displayed their finery to each other, described their illnesses, and assumed airs of so-called gentility. If Elisi bore away the palm in dress, illnesses, and manners, she was much delighted, and did not like to part with Trini. But if Trini had the advantage, had heavier silver clasps or a bodice of richer silk, if she had less ordinary spasms, had made a longer stay at the baths, or had aped some fashionable absurdity, Elisi pouted and cried, hid herself, and only reappeared when Trinette was already in her chaise. Then she appeared with a delighted air, wearing gloves the finger-tips of which had been cut off, with an elegant handkerchief in her hand and a cap on her head, adorned with fine lace and gay ribbons; she put on what she thought a distinguished air, and wished the travellers "Bon voyage!" "Au revoir!" As soon as they had driven off, Elisi said she was very glad they were gone at last: her brother was a rustic; Trinette had bad taste, and the children bad manners.

As to Freneli, she did not look agreeable during this visit. The guests treated her, not even as an ordinary maid-servant, but with evident contempt, or the son would try to make her the victim of some practical joke. She was also indignant at the greed with which they made prey of their father and mother, and the thanklessness with which they received their gifts. Trinette was not weary of talking of the presents she had from her own parents; she said she could never make ends meet if they were not liberal; her father had given her six new thalers, and her mother ten, during her last visit, and she had only to ask them for whatever she wanted. The good mother-in-law naturally did not wish to be behind in generosity, and gave almost beyond her means, scarcely receiving civil thanks in return.

The children went about meddling with everything and spoiling whatever came to their hands, and at the least word of check, answered rudely, or cried like wounded sea-calves. If Trini made her little gains

at Steinbrucke, her husband did nor neglect business on a larger scale. He would buy from his father a cow, which he never paid for, or bring a lame horse and take away the best from his father's stable, promising to send back the one and fetch the other, which he never did. Or he would have an account to settle for wine ; he had not the money by him at the moment ; Joggeli must advance the necessary sum, which was never repaid. At the same time, he had the most sovereign contempt for his father and mother, as silly farm-folk ; he treated them as two money-sacks which are worthy of consideration in proportion to their contents, and he took back to Freuligen many capital jokes about his own cleverness in fleecing the old man. He could not fail to observe the unusual order which prevailed at his father's house, although it was the busy harvest-time ; he was still more astonished at the cleanliness of the stables and the good condition of the horses, and much regretted that he had not brought a lame old nag this time. He was no less pleased with the cow-stable and the young cow bought by Ulric at Berne, which was now worth three louis d'or more than he had then paid.

Father, said the son, how is it that at your age you begin to know how to take things in hand ? You have splendid cattle, and the whole place is in as good order as if it were Sunday.

Does it please you ? said Joggeli, shortly.

But the mother could not help saying, We have a most valuable head-servant, who studies our interest as if it were his own ; he has as much understanding as an old farmer ; and it is a real pleasure to see how all things prosper in his hands.

The son did not say much to this, but he walked about the farm more than usual, saw the last corn loaded and carried, traversed the meadows, and looked at everything so closely, that Joggeli wondered what he was about, and thought he was counting on speedy possession of his heritage. He had no intention of giving

## 158      Ulric, the Farm Servant

place to him yet ; the old often survived the young ; not that he desired this, but such things did sometimes happen !

When it was getting dark, there was difficulty in assembling the people for the harvest feast.

Freneli, very red-faced from baking and cooking all day, got quite angry at this foolish and unnecessary delay. However, by degrees the places at table were filled, and all partook freely of the abundant supplies. There were many tureens of meat soup, flavoured with saffron, and so thick with bread that it was difficult to insert a spoon. There were immense joints of meat, salt and fresh, bacon, sliced apples, cakes of three sorts, and bottles of wine, each containing a measure. Sparrows in the millet are well off, but what is that to being at a harvest feast where the table groans with the weight of the food, and there is scarcely any space between the dishes ?

Yet this was not good enough for Trini and Elisi ; neither the company nor the cookery was refined enough for them ; so a special spread was made in the little parlour. They had fish in sauce, and fish fried, sweetened peas, roasts of veal and pigeons, ham and cakes, fancy rolls, red wine, tea for those who liked it, and dessert. The children went from one table to the other, were rude and greedy at both, ate and drank until they could not gorge any more, and then they had to be carried to bed. Elisi and Trini detailed to each other what they could eat and what they could not, and the effects of various kinds of food upon them, partaking at the same time freely of every dainty.

John, the son of the house, did not linger long at the family table, but went out to the servants and work-people, and stayed with them until the morning dawned. He attached himself specially to Ulric, pledged him, gave him tobacco, and conversed with him familiarly on various subjects, so that he began to think the innkeeper of Freuligen far less haughty than he was said to be. But Ulric was most astonished to see him appear in the

stable quite early in the morning, when he was alone at work, and the other servants were fast asleep.

What ! are you about already ? said the innkeeper.

Oh yes, said Ulric. The beasts worked hard yesterday, and had no harvest feast at night, so it would not be right to make them wait for their food.

It is not every one who is so sensible, and for this reason I have a proposal to make to you. Come to me ! I would give you ten thalers more wages, and meat and wine every day.

But what would your father say to your enticing me to leave ?

That does not matter to you ; leave that to me, said the innkeeper. You cannot remain here ; the old man is too queer and mistrustful to keep anybody long. It is quite different with me. I am often from home, and my wife is a fine lady, and I want a servant that I can depend upon ; if I could find one to suit me, I would make his situation more advantageous to him than any in the neighbourhood. Decide to come ; you will not have to rue it. Here is a thaler of earnest money.

Keep your money, said Ulric. You are in too great a hurry. A month ago I might have given a different answer, but now I have nothing to complain of. They are kind to me, especially the mistress, and when I am satisfied in a place, I do not leave it.

The innkeeper urged him so much, that he ended in asking time for consideration. At this moment, they heard a noise at the fountain, and as they went out of the stable, Freneli was re-entering the house, carrying a pail full of water.

At midday eating and drinking began again, only Elisi and Trini pretended that they did not feel well enough to take anything, yet managed to eat plenty when they were not observed. In the afternoon the visitors went. John slipped a five-batz piece into Ulric's hand, with a meaning glance. • The grandmother looked for a long time after her son's coach, and said at last, I love those

## 160      Ulric, the Farm Servant

children, but they are very unruly. If I had them always, they would have to behave differently. Then, as she went in, she said to Freneli, John is grander than ever. Only fancy his being fool enough to give Ulric a five-batz piece !

He had probably a reason, said Freneli.

Yes. He knows it is customary amongst gentlefolks.

No, cousin, he had another reason. I scarcely like to tell you. It is a nasty trick of John. This time he has not cheated his father out of a horse or a cow, so he has been trying to get Ulric away ; that is why he gave him the five-batz piece.

Oh ! what do you tell me ? Oh ! the rogue ! What is to be done if one cannot trust one's own children ? John ! John ! You are an unnatural son. But it is his wife's fault ; she makes him so. He used not to be like that formerly. But how do you know this ?

I fetched water in the early morning, because the maid-servants were asleep ; and I was surprised to see John, who generally does not get up until ten o'clock, already in the stable with Ulric. I waited while the water ran into the pail, and heard John urging Ulric to take service with him, and to accept a large thaler as earnest money.

And did Ulric take it ? asked the mother anxiously.

No. He behaved very well, better than I should have expected. They probably heard me, for they broke off, and I only know that Ulric requested a fortnight for consideration ; but I think if the master asks him in good time to stay on, there will be no difficulty about it.

But Joggeli has always a hundred reasons for delay. He says that when servants are engaged for a year, they do their work carelessly, thinking that a little more or less can make no difference.

Yes, said Freneli. He thinks that men are all made in one mould ; and as he treats the good like the bad, he can never keep the good.

He must engage Ulric this very day.

But do not, at least, betray that it was I who told you, said Freneli. He mistrusts me enough already.

The old woman sought her husband to tell him what she had just heard, but he did not seem greatly astonished, and only remarked that John never came without getting something out of him ; he had always been like that from his youth upwards, but that was not *his* (Joggeli's) fault. Then he wished to know how his wife had been made aware of this new trick, and she ended by acknowledging that she had heard it from Freneli. I cannot tell you, wife, how I dislike that girl, said Joggeli. She pokes her nose into everything, and there is always a calling of Freneli ! Freneli ! I tell you she goes after Ulric, and we shall soon have a fine piece of work ! Like mother, like daughter. What had she to do in the stable so early in the morning if she was not running after Ulric ? Depend upon it that as soon as I can manage it, I will send her away ; she has already caused disgrace enough in the family, and she shall not bring any more upon it.

Then you may do the housekeeping yourself, said the old woman. It is not right that Freneli should be blamed for everything. She had a good intention in giving me this information, and I do not understand how you can take it amiss. If we are deceived, it is your own fault, for any one who tries to render you a service gets no thanks, but is immediately suspected. It is foolish to wish to do anything for you.

Joggeli was much occupied by this business ; it tormented him like a gnawing worm.

## CHAPTER XVI

HOW THE EFFORTS OF A GOOD MOTHER CAN MAKE  
CROOKED WAYS STRAIGHT

“ . . . to bring at once strength and healing,—this is the work of human lips, taught of God.”

IN the morning Ulric went to the cherry trees to look if all the fruit had been gathered. Joggeli unexpectedly joined him, and remarked that the harvest had been well got in, and nothing had been behindhand, only he must not trouble himself too much for the women-folk ; the corn was the principal thing ; the other crops were of less consequence. Then he gave him a large thaler, as a token of his satisfaction. Ulric thanked him, but said, though he knew the corn was the principal thing, he was of opinion that the other produce should not be neglected ; everything that was cultivated on the farm was worthy of attention. Then Joggeli said he just wished to ask if he thought of staying on with him. Ulric said he did not quite know what to say, he did not like changing, but he would rather leave than be mistrusted or risk the repetition of what had lately happened.

But you understand that I am satisfied, said the master, and he gave him another large thaler as earnest money, adding that he did not generally do so with a re-engagement, but he could be as generous as another, and he preferred giving his money himself to letting others play him tricks with it.

Then Ulric thought of the incident of the morning, and asked the farmer who could have repeated that to him already.

Ah, said Joggeli, you should be on your guard with those who are most smooth and gracious ; they are like cats, whose paws seem to be of velvet, but they can give a backward claw.

After these words Joggeli hobbled away with his stick

## The Efforts of a Good Mother 163

towards Ueffige (he liked to go there on a Saturday to drink his pint), leaving a poisoned arrow in the heart of his head-servant, who almost regretted that he had agreed to remain at the Steinbrücke.

Who was this cat that pursued him with her claw? It could be no one but Freneli, for had she not been to the fountain during his conversation with the innkeeper? Henceforth who in the house could be trusted? He had been on good terms with every one, but he had believed that specially confidential relations, without any thought of love, were established between himself and Freneli. She was inside the house what he was outside of it; they could materially aid or seriously hinder each other. Ulric thought he was promoting the general good by his good understanding with her, for he comprehended perfectly that on a farm, as well as in a State, the general interest is not promoted when those in authority pull different ways.

So Freneli was false to him, and accused him behind his back! the thought hurt him, and as it took possession of his mind, he became very irritable, and several times he hesitated as to whether it would not be best to return the earnest money, and go to John immediately. He became morose and disagreeable, giving short answers or pretending not to hear when he was addressed. The mother asked more than once, What is the matter with Ulric? He is quite changed. What has offended him, or who has vexed him? No one knew anything about it. She questioned Joggeli, who began to laugh, and assured her that she need not have any anxiety; he had made all quite right with his head-servant. Then she urged Freneli to have a talk with Ulric, but she refused, saying that she had given him no cause of offence, yet he was more disagreeable with her than with any one else. Either he did not answer when she spoke, or he said cutting things which she could not understand. The cousin must talk to him herself, she was the proper person, and the sooner she did it the better—the existing state of things was painful and annoying.



## 164      Ulric, the Farm Servant

The mistress went to church once more. It was quite an event at Ueffige. The service had never appeared so short to her : there were so many new things to see in the church ; the pulpit had been repainted, some benches had had backs put to them, and there were people present, both old and young, whom she did not know. The preacher's words poured out like water from a fountain. She must really go oftener in future. After the sermon she went to a shop and bought some things, amongst others a silk necktie with a pretty border.

When she reached home, they were rather impatiently waiting dinner for her, for the good woman had been detained longer than she intended by the attractions of the shop ; she had much to see there, some bargaining to do, and some inquiries to make. She could not talk enough of her pleasant morning, and she said she must be more diligent in going to church. If only the parson was not so punctual with the ringing of the bells, she thought she would go every Sunday. But she observed the direction in which Ulric went when he left the table, and when the whole party had dispersed, she followed him up to his little room, where she found him occupied in reading his Bible.

You cannot see here, she said. Why do you not come down to us? You have seemed very strange lately, and I cannot make out the reason. You looked after my flax and my cherries so well, that I have brought you a neckerchief as a token of my satisfaction. But has some one vexed you? What is the matter with you?

A gift is not necessary, said Ulric, looking at the necktie with pleasure. I only did my duty.

But why are you vexed? Come now, tell me all about it.

Well, I am vexed with Freneli. She had no occasion to blacken me to the master, and to make mischief because John wished to engage me. I said nothing which might not have been heard by every one, but I do not know how she repeated my words, or what she added to them.

## The Efforts of a Good Mother 165

Who could have told you such a falsehood?

The master himself, not in so many words, but so plainly that one could not fail to understand.

It is an abominable thing! God forgive me, said the mistress. Freneli told him nothing whatever, but she complained to me of John, and praised the way in which you had behaved. You are very foolish to believe all that you hear. You know what Joggeli is, and you really might see, not only that Freneli does nothing to offend you, but that she quite approves of you.

What can one do? replied Ulric. On one side it is not easy to understand women, and on the other it is sad not to be able to take a master's word.

Alas! so it is, said the poor mistress; and we must take things as they are. Now, recover your good humour, and mind you do not let Freneli know what you have told me; she would dislike my old man still more, she would show it, and she could not change him. He has not always been thus, but since the servants combined to deceive him, he has become dreadfully suspicious; he trusts no one, not even me. At first his want of confidence was a great grief to me; I thought I could not bear it, and I tried to correct him, but I have gradually become accustomed to it, and I must own that I am not more unhappy than formerly. There is always a something, and if I had not this, I should have another burden to bear. Each thinks his own load the heaviest, and the great thing is to learn to bear it without impatience, and to endure what we cannot cure. The poor Joggeli torments himself more than he torments others, and I have often cried to think how much he must suffer from his own faults. And do you not see that servants ought to have patience with their masters? But be sure that you say nothing to Freneli. I believe she would run away, or fly into a passion with my old man. She is a dear, good girl, but she cannot bear such things.

Ulric promised what she desired, and the good mistress, on her way downstairs, made up a little speech for

## 166      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Freneli, in case she should ask what she had been doing at the top of the house.

The old man wondered very much at the restored peace; he was very sorry for the ceasing of the discord, which he had watched with malicious pleasure; but he made no inquiries, and his wife did not give him any clue to her intervention. The whole affair was a piece of diplomacy which would have astonished Louis Philippe himself.

The work was resumed with more zeal than ever, for all becomes easy to contented minds and united efforts. When these are wanting in a busy time, impatience and disaffection spread to all the workers, and a drag is placed on the wheels of labour.

The fruit was so abundant this year, that they scarcely knew how to gather it. There were manure to load, seed to sow, and uncultivated ground to be reclaimed. The style of ploughing at Steinbrucke had been very slight and superficial; the matted roots in the furrows had remained unhoed; the seed-corn found no loose earth in which to germinate. Much labour was therefore needed to render the land fertile, but the master did not see this, and Ulric had difficulty in getting the work rightly done. Joggeli was vexed to see six beasts at the plough instead of four, and he did not like the procession of hoers which followed it. He muttered to himself that it was the most ridiculous thing in the world to bury the good soil and turn up the bad, poor soil to the surface. They could not do more if they were trying to make the land unprofitable. They drove the manure in deep enough to go through to America, and impoverished the land that was being prepared for corn. It could not possibly produce much, as any child might understand.

Fortunately he went away just at this juncture into the French cantons, to buy wine, or rather to pay for that which his son was going to purchase, so that Ulric was left at liberty to prosecute the work in his own way. On his return he was surprised to see the corn coming up and promising well, but he said, We shall see what

## The Efforts of a Good Mother 167

it is like in the spring; it will not stand the winter months.

As they had begun the seed-sowing in good time, they were able to get all the outdoor work finished before the snow came; and they could remain under shelter during the bad weather. The mother remarked that the season had certainly been favourable, but she had known people who never got done even in a fine autumn, and would not if it lasted until Easter—they thought it wrong if they did not leave some potatoes, turnips, or beans standing out the whole winter. Certainly, if the weather was against them, they could not help it; in the year '16 the oats were uncut at Christmas-time!

The meadows next came under review. Ditches, large and small, were cleared out; and the mud from them was spread upon the land. Ulric even proposed to make, in wet places, subsoil drains, which carry off the superfluous waters from marshy ground, so that the surface becomes drained and fit for cultivation. Many acres of good land are gained in this way, and more might be acquired. But this was too much for Joggeli. They could not do everything at once, he said; it would soon be New Year, and then it would be time to begin the threshing, or they would not have finished by Easter. If they had time, they would see to it in the spring, but there was no sense in turning everything topsy-turvy, and it would also be a great expense, with very doubtful result. The real reason was that he was jealous of Ulric, and he feared that people would give him the credit of all the improvements at Steinbrücke. The fellow was too high-minded, and thought he knew more than anybody else. Joggeli asked the other servants how they would have liked digging drains all the winter. Ulric had proposed it, but he had refused to set them to an employment which was so hard, and so destructive to their clothes. It was well for them that he was still the master, and had no idea of letting Ulric carry all before him.

Of course, the servants quite agreed with the master in

## 168      Ulric, the Farm Servant

this particular. An undertaking which gives extra work is generally unpopular, for the ordinary work must also be done, and more zeal and industry are required. Many a farm-servant leaves his place when he sees such a work looming in the distance ; he says, You may do my share when I am gone. I have no notion of destroying my clothes and half killing myself. This desire to do nothing extra goes so far that many refuse to put themselves out of the way, are rude if required to help the women, and turn a deaf ear to the orders of the mistress. It is true that some employers try to get too much work out of an insufficient number of servants, and as a camel refuses to get up when it is too heavily laden, so servants who are unreasonably driven must assert themselves. But this does not apply to the unwillingness with which a servant works in a press of business and his tenacious fear of being put upon : or to the short-sighted impatience with which a man will throw up a place if he is urged to move quickly or reproved for spending four hours about something which might readily be done in two. This is a spirit which brings people to poverty, and their suffering is the result of their own faults. They lose the habit of activity, and injure their characters accordingly.

The servants, excited by Joggeli's words, did not content themselves with rude and abusive speeches, but they sought, and easily found, motives for Ulric's actions. They knew well what the fellow was about, but he had not caught his hare yet ! He wished to be the pattern servant ; he had notions in his head ; he thought of becoming farmer there. But the old woman would not be able to manage *that* ! To this general proposition they added a number of others, and jokes and taunts passed round.

So it became, very difficult for Ulric to maintain order.

## CHAPTER XVII

THE HEAD-SERVANT FINDS FAVOUR IN THE EYES OF  
THE MASTER'S DAUGHTER

“The sun has no ‘liberty,’—a dead leaf has much ; the dust of which you are formed has no liberty, its liberty will come with its corruption.”

ELISI had ended by falling in love with Ulric, and she behaved most foolishly with him. On the Sunday afternoons in the winter, when Ulric was reading in the living-room, she was glad to display her finery, as we have seen ; he was called upon to advise and admire in a manner which became quite irksome to him ; but spring-time came, and broke up these conferences ; Elisi missed them, and felt quite dull without them. She had half-a-dozen flower-pots ; hitherto she had not troubled herself about them, and they might have remained always in the same place if Freneli had not moved them into the sunshine or shade, as the case might be. But suddenly she developed a lively interest in these plants, complained that Freneli took no care of them and would leave them to die ; and generally asked Ulric, before he could get away from table, to move them somewhere for her ; he had to smell the sweet perfume of one or another, and when he thought he had satisfied her, it would occur to Elisi that another place would suit them still better. When the servants were seated on the bench before the stable after work in the evening, Elisi would appear with a watering-can, and fill it so awkwardly at the fountain, spilling the water into her shoes, that Ulric was obliged to go and help her, while the others laughed and jeered openly enough at these foolish manoeuvres. If it rained, or she had not the flowers on her mind, she would trip about the bench on some pretext, or she would take a bit of knitting in her hand, and walk rapidly up and down under the projecting eaves to warm her feet, as she said.

## 170      Ulric, the Farm Servant

One fine day, when they were getting in the crop of after-grass, she put on her sulphur-coloured hat, drew on long gloves, fastened them with a pair of bracelets, and, with her sunshade in her hand, went out just as they were going to fetch a load. Ulric had to choose a rake for her. She mounted into the waggon, and sat there with the sunshade in one hand and the rake in the other, complaining bitterly of the jolting of her rough carriage. On her arrival at the meadow, she wished to rake after Ulric, who was helping to load, but she could not quite manage it; her rake caught in the grass, and she was not able to draw it out again; raking and holding a sunshade at the same time was a novel and unsuccessful experiment; besides, the sun was so scorching! She took refuge in the waggon, to the great inconvenience of the man who was loading it; as she screamed when she had to give way a little, and was far too frightened to move herself, he had to lift her and her umbrella, like a child, from place to place. When the workpeople saw a sunshade on the top of the waggon, they could scarcely believe their eyes; and they nearly split their sides with laughing when they perceived Elisi under the silken canopy. As the hay got higher and higher, she kept up a continual screaming, but she was determined not to get down; and she drove home on the tottering load, uttering many cries of distress. At last they reached the barn in safety, but the most critical moment had then arrived. She could not venture to descend by the rope at the back or the ladder in front. "The father and mother came out when they heard her cries, and the latter exclaimed,

Did you ever see anything so absurd? Who ever saw a simpleton with a sunshade on the top of a load of hay?

Joggeli blamed the mother for not preventing such folly. Ulric placed a ladder against the waggon, but Elisi remained standing on the top, and cried out each time that she raised a foot:

Hold me! hold me! I shall fall! '

Then Joggeli told him to fetch her down; he had

been silly to allow her to get up. He ascended the ladder accordingly, and offered her his hand, but as she redoubled her screams, there was nothing to be done but to take her in his arms and carry her down. She held her arms so tightly round his neck, that his face was purple when he reached the ground.

This was one of the chief events of Elisi's life, and she dwelt on the moving narrative on many subsequent occasions. Captain Parry's experiences on his expedition to the North Pole were but trifles compared to Elisi's adventures between the meadow and the barn on that memorable day.

Shortly after this, she began to assume haughty airs with Ulric, responding as little to his salutations as to those of the other servants, complaining that he smelt of the stable, and talking of his great horny hands, while she could not refrain from touching them with her thin, flabby fingers.

This conduct was very unpleasant to Ulric, and drew upon him the taunts of his companions, but he did not attach any importance to it, regarding it as the folly and caprice of a spoiled child. He remembered that she was his master's daughter, and treated her with due respect, but the others openly made game of the poor creature, and unsparingly taunted and teased her. She would go crying to her parents or to her bed; Joggeli would take his stick and hobble away from the disturbance, while the mother would try to calm and comfort her; she would give her some soothing drops, and, when she was better, go out and scold the offenders for not letting her child alone. They would generally answer, that they had no wish to meddle with her or speak to her if she was not constantly putting herself in their way. She should stop in the house, and let *them* alone.

All at once Elisi took it into her head that she would like to go and visit her brother. It was a most inconvenient time; her father could not drive her, and they tried to induce her to give up the idea. But she began to cry and sob so violently, that they feared she would



## 172      Ulric, the Farm Servant

choke, and orders were given to Ulric to take her the next day. Then she recovered quickly, turned out boxes and drawers, and spread her finery about the room, so that she might be the better able to select costumes which would mortify Trinette. Ulric did not much like the expedition ; he did not care to go to John, nor to be subjected to the jokes of his companions, who made very merry about his *tête-à-tête* with his master's daughter. At the same time, Freneli seemed vexed and put out, and hastily threw down the shoes which he had brought to get cleaned. This pained Ulric, and he would gladly have asked her the reason, but he had no opportunity. When he appeared in the morning, in his best clothes, and wearing the mistress's fine neckerchief, she said to him, with a mocking air, that he was well got up, but it would not answer. Elisi looked quite dazzling, though not with beauty ; she was followed by two maids, carrying packages, and her mother, with a bandbox of things which required special care. She intended to return the next day, but she said one never knew what would happen, and she ought to be able to dress twice in the day at least. As the procession passed through the stube, Freneli took up the cat and walked after them a few steps, with the question on the tip of her tongue, Wouldn't you like to take Pussy also? Then she changed her mind, put the cat down, stayed indoors, and pressed sad eyes against the dimmed window-pane.

Ulric sat in front, as a matter of course, and Elisi on the back seat, which was covered. As soon as they were out of sight of the house, she tried to enter into conversation with him, but his spirited horse occupied his attention, so that he could not look behind, and his answers were disjointed, and very unsatisfactory to Elisi. A few drops of rain afforded her an excuse for inviting Ulric to come inside ; he declined at first, but yielded when he thought of his new hat. His companion urged him not to squeeze himself into the corner, assuring him that she was not in the least inconvenienced ; there was plenty of room for them both, as they were neither of

them so stout as her father and mother. She informed Ulric that her mother used to be quite thin in her youth, and that the doctor had said that she also would get stout and rosy when she was married, for she had been a lovely child. People used to stop to look at her. Even when she left home for one of the French cantons, she was the most beautiful girl in the neighbourhood ; she had skin as smooth as a mirror, and cheeks like opening roses. She used to sing and play the guitar, which was fastened round her neck with a red and black ribbon ; she had such pretty songs. One was—

“ In Aargau were two lovers,  
Who had each other dear,”

and another—

“ Our cat and the parson's cat  
Have bitten one another.”

She had had\* crowds of handsome admirers, and she had only to choose the most distinguished. But she had fallen ill, and been obliged to return home ; her parents had been very harsh with her, and had made her work like an ordinary farmer's daughter ; and she had only common food, such as the dogs would not eat in French Switzerland. Since then she had not had an hour's health. Then she related the history of her illnesses, until she perceived the little town where she wished to make some purchases. She asked Ulric to stop, and told him it did not rain ; he could sit outside again ; people would wonder if they saw her side by side with a servant-man, and make a great talk about it, which she did not wish. Ulric felt hurt, but silently resumed his former seat. Elisi gave herself grand airs at the inn, ordered some refreshment for her servant, and gave particular directions, which seemed the result of much forethought, for the preparation of various dainties for herself. Then she made purchases, and said in each shop, My servant will fetch them ; and on her return to the inn, her first inquiry was, Where is my servant ? She

## 174      Ulric, the Farm Servant

behaved in this manner until they had quite left the little town; then she presented Ulric with a red cotton handkerchief. He said he wished for nothing.

Only look at it, said Elisi.

I have not time. I must mind my horse.

But stop, and come inside, said Elisi.

I am quite right where I am, and I need not mind being seen.

Are you vexed, Ulric? Come, be a good boy. What can I do? It is not my fault that genteel persons are obliged to mind appearances. Vulgar people can do as they please; no one pays any attention; but every one notices what I do, and is ready to make a talk about it. But do not be offended, or I shall not be happy any more.

She ordered, begged, and cried so much, that Ulric at last went inside, for fear she should go into fits. But he stopped not far from Freuligen, and silently changed his place.

Freuligen is a large village, situated in a level country, rich in meadows and woods. It is traversed by a high road, and watered by beautiful streams. The people are rich and arrogant. They are compelled to learn to read and write, and their conceit knows no bounds. Because they have mastered the alphabet, they consider themselves acquainted with all things in heaven and earth. It is worth while to see one of these men, with dilated nostrils, his hat on one side, and his hands in his pockets, holding forth about things human and Divine, as if he represented in his own person a whole university, composed of four faculties and seven liberal arts. If he happens also to have a pipe in his mouth, it is not safe to contradict him. Jupiter with thunder and lightning in both hands, in the act of smiting cities and continents, must have had a gentle expression of face compared with that of a man of Freuligen when he has a tobacco-pipe in his mouth, and some one ventures to contradict him; he pours out oaths with each puff of tobacco, swearing in due proportion to his own sense of superiority, so that one might think him

not only a living university, but also a living steam-engine, fabricating oaths wholesale. If these men of Freuligen do hear a far-off truth, relating either to religion, medicine, politics, or law, they place themselves immediately in a state of antagonism; but if a half-witted adventurer brings out the wildest blasphemy, it suits them thoroughly; they listen wide-eyed and open-mouthed, then roar out their applause, and strike upon the table, declaring, He is right; upon my soul, he is right! They are a fearful specimen of a certain condition of mind; they receive only what is false, because their delight is in lies; they prove the correctness of the saying, that it is only they who are of the truth, and who are themselves true, who are capable of understanding, loving, and believing what is true. This psychological observation affords a key to many facts otherwise inexplicable, and explains much that is puzzling in the history of people and of States. When we see most offensive, violent, and self-seeking men find more faith and more adherents than the most loyal friends of humanity, we find here a clue to the painful enigma.

When the travellers arrived in front of the inn, the ostler came to take charge of the horse; the children were playing about, but they did not move towards them; faces appeared at the window, and then vanished. Elisi stood there in green silk, looking pale and sickly, and watched Ulric handing down her packages, while no one seemed aware of their arrival. Then she decided to enter; the children stared, and did not attempt to greet their dear aunt by word or gesture; when she tried to speak to them, they turned their backs.

However, when they had gone indoors, John appeared, and saluted his sister with the following affectionate words:

Bunshur! Bunshur! What on earth have you come for? I should sooner have thought of death than of you! What, in the name of fortune, do you want with luggage?

He greeted Ulric familiarly, and would have given him his hand if Ulric had had one at liberty. John ushered

## 176      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Elisi into the room which was reserved for travellers of some consideration, and withdrew, under pretext of telling his wife that she had come. His real aim was to follow Ulric to the stable; he showed him his horses and cows, and reproached him for not having taken service with him, assuring him that he would have been much better off than at Steinbrucke. Meanwhile Elisi had time to look at the pictures which decorated the walls of the inn parlour; they were not beautiful, though they were considered so by some good people who had never seen any paintings except on signboards, church clocks, and wedding chests. No one was even sent to offer her any refreshment. In fact, the mistress of the house, having seen from the window the grass-green silk dress of her sister-in-law, was engaged at her own toilet. She could not appear with soiled chemisette, dirty hands, a bodice without hooks, shoes down at the heel, and a common cotton apron. So Elisi was kept waiting while Trini was dressing herself, and she felt greatly irritated by the long delay. At length Trini rustled in, and said, Bonsoir, Elisi. I am glad to see you; and she replied, *Merci*, Trinette. I thought I was quite forgotten. Trini excused herself, saying she had been hindered by the dressmaker, who wanted to take her measure for a new costume; besides, she had thought that her husband was with Elisi. In the meantime the two sisters-in-law viewed each other up and down with critical appreciation; and while Trini (in proud consciousness that she was the finer of the two) gave orders to the cook and waiting-maid as to refreshments for her guest, Elisi begged to go into a bedroom to change her dress, as she had put on her worst things for the journey. Though Trinette assured her that she looked as if she had just come from Paris, she was not to be persuaded; she withdrew with a maid, who carried her packages. Meanwhile a grand dinner was prepared, and the hostess asked her husband to fetch some Neuenburg from the cellar, but he only brought Roquemaure, a sour, light French wine, in a Neuenburg bottle, saying to himself, What

do they know about Neuenburg? Roquemaure is quite good enough for those two simpletons.

At last Elisi appeared, in a sky-blue dress, with an embroidered habit-shirt, a large brooch, gold watch-chain, clasps like coins on her bodice, and further decoration of little pebble chains, with gilt pendants. Her costume was so new and brilliant, that Trini turned pale with envy. She controlled herself sufficiently, however, to express admiration of her sister-in-law's elegance, but she took care to add that it was very easy for a daughter who still lived at home with her parents to spend money on dress and finery. A married woman, with children, who has to see to the housekeeping, must draw in a little. Neither she nor her husband had come in for their inheritance, and if her own parents were not so good to them, they could not get on at all. They made a great deal, but they also spent a great deal, in an inn business. Elisi was now quite happy; she ate and drank heartily, praised the food, and especially the wine. Her father must get some Neuenburg, she said; they had only Taveller at her home; it came from Bienne, and was sour enough to poison rats.

After dinner she gave her sister-in-law a small woollen shawl, which she received with scarcely repressed disdain; she said it was very warm, and she had long wanted one like it; it would do to wear in the cellar at the making of the sour-kraut; she had to superintend, though she was almost frozen last year, or the maids would not make it properly. Trini was not in the most agreeable humour, and Elisi felt very dull and tired. Shouts of laughter came from the neighbouring room, and it occurred to her that she might be much better amused than with her silent hostess; besides, was it not a pity if no one in Freuligen saw her sky-blue dress except the spiteful Trini, and the stupid waiting-maid, who had not testified her admiration by a single remark? And what might not result? It was no wonder that a suitable match did not occur for her, when she was never seen! Now that she was for once away from Steinbrucke, she

## 178      Ulric, the Farm Servant

would profit by the opportunity. But she gained nothing by beating about the bush with Trini, and when she asked of whom the company consisted, Trini replied, Oh ! it is some pig-drivers from Lutern and Eschlismat. Elisi said she wished to speak to her servant ; and when Trini proposed sending for him, she declined, said she would not give trouble, stood up, and opened the door of communication.

The room was full, certainly not of pig-drivers from Lutern, but of the old and young men of Freuligen, who swore and laughed as they sat at their usual evening occupations of smoking, drinking, and playing. Ulric, as guest, was treated by John to tobacco and wine ; Elisi tapped him on the shoulder, and told him she wished to leave early in the morning ; he should give the horse a feed in good time. A merry overseer of the commune, who sat on the opposite side of the table, asked who was that pretty young lady ; might he venture to offer her a glass of wine ? One word led to another. Elisi sat down in an empty place, and enjoyed the jokes of old and young ; she did not say much, but simpered and used her fine handkerchief in an affected manner, so as to display the rings on her fingers. She remained there for quite two hours, and entirely forgot her sister-in-law. But at last she went to rejoin her. Trinette had gone to bed, leaving word with the waiting-maid that she had toothache. Perhaps she was offended, said Elisi. The maid said she did not know, she had been very queer ; and here a long conversation about Trinette would have followed if the cook had not gone to the door and summoned the maid with an oath, because she did not fetch the soup, and the supper was getting spoiled.

When the meal was served, John brought Ulric, and swore when he saw the table laid only for two, declared that the stupid maid could not count, and that his wife was the laziest dawdle in the whole canton. He treated Ulric like an old comrade, and pressed him to eat and drink, but behaved with much less civility to his sister ; he made rude jokes at her expense, and said, amongst

other things, she had not hooked a husband yet, but it was not for want of trying ; she had better learn to make soup and knit stockings ; then she might have a better chance. Perhaps Ulric would take you, he added, if you were to ask him. With such brotherly sallies the innkeeper spiced the meal.

Ulric went down early the next morning, and, to the great dismay of the servants, their master appeared only a little later. John got into a terrible passion when he discovered that they were in the habit of taking their ease, while he believed that they were doing their work. He found that his own example of laziness had been followed, and swore at the state of things which his early rising revealed to him ; but as he lay in bed the next morning until nine o'clock, he might have spared his breath. How can people rise early when they spend half the night at drink and play ? And what are servants likely to do if the master and mistress do not appear until the morning is far advanced ?

Nowhere are the consequences of ill-doing more prompt and sure, than in an inn which is kept open late into the night. The innkeeper who joins his customers in midnight revels is not likely to have clearness of mind to watch over his interests ; he loses by neglect far more than he gains ; he walks straight into ruin of body and soul, prepares for himself an old age of misery, smooths for his children a pathway to wickedness, and frequently ends by begging his bread.

John thundered and swore as long as his amazed servants were in his sight ; they had not cleared out the guest-room, nor milked the cows, nor rubbed down the horses ; and while he and Ulric were on the way to his land, which he wished to show him, he complained bitterly of them all, and said he would give a hundred thalers to one on whom he could depend. He was not acquainted with the proverb : Like master, like man, and he did not know that a bad master never keeps good servants ; some become bad under him, and those who wish to remain good are obliged to leave him.



## 180      Ulric, the Farm Servant

When the two men re-entered, they found Elisi waiting for them, looking very cross, and dressed in a sulphur-coloured bodice and apron. Trini had sent to excuse herself, as she had slept badly. They had breakfast at half-past nine of cakes from the preceding day, butter, cheese, cream, coffee, and beautifully white bread. Elisi said nothing of having the horse put in; she walked about the house and on the terrace, displaying herself, her gloved hands, and her fine pocket-handkerchief, while John took Ulric into his cellar. The clock struck eleven, and then Elisi beckoned to the latter. She would go and change her dress, and as soon as she was ready, he must put the horse in. Nearly an hour passed before she reappeared in grass-green. And who sat there, magnificent in chocolate-coloured silk, with gold and silver ornaments, but Trini herself?—Trini, who wished to show that she also could dress well, though she was no longer an unmarried daughter, living with her parents. Elisi became livid; she could scarcely form her mouth to a *Bonjour* and an inquiry after the toothache. Trini was friendliness itself, wished Elisi to give her another day, and finally persuaded her to stay for dinner. The best of everything was put on the table, but it did not taste half so good to Elisi as on the preceding day—the food stuck in her throat as she looked at Trinette, and the so-called Neuenburg had quite a different taste. She took advantage of the first opportunity to hasten her departure.

When Elisi's various packages were stowed away, and she was settled inside, Ulric was getting up outside, when John interfered, said the weather was bad, and he would be a fool not to get under cover; he and Elisi would not eat one another! So Ulric had no alternative. His companion drew back as far as she could into the corner of the chaise, and did not speak until they were at a safe distance from Freuligen. Then she revived and spoke out angrily against her brother and sister-in-law; he was a coarse, rude man, she was a bad wife, and almost a fool; their servants were worthy of them both.

## The Master's Daughter 181

She would be very foolish to remain unmarried for the sake of people who only made game of her, who spent much and earned little, and who thought of nothing but eating and drinking and gratifying their own fancies. She would not like her money to pass into such hands. She would rather marry the first man she met, than leave them a kreutzer. When once her father and mother were dead, she knew what she would have to expect; they would keep her under lock and key until they were sure of her money. But she was cleverer than they thought, she would cut into Trinette's chocolate gown, and a daughter who was heiress to fifty thousand florins would not let herself be played with in that way. She did not want a rich husband, but she wanted one who was handsome and kind, and who would make her happy. As to her parents' consent, that need not be taken into account, for she was sure to get her own way if she cried and made a noise about it. She had already refused several matches, because they were not to her taste; and those simpletons at Freuligen thought she was not going to marry. But they should soon see that they were mistaken. She would take the first who offered.

Ulric might have made a declaration then and there, but he remembered that his master's daughter sat beside him. He did not take any advantage of her advances, or seem aware that her hints might apply to himself.

Elisi choose to pass by the little town where she had distinguished herself on the preceding day, and to stop at an unknown place; this time she had Ulric with her, and treated him to the best of everything in the private room which she had requested for herself. She was still more agreeable during the rest of the drive, and Ulric could not but conclude that he had only to make her an offer in order to be accepted with eagerness. We may suppose that the matter would have come to a crisis on that very day if the conversation had not been rudely interrupted by a plunge of the horse, which bolted towards

## 182      Ulric, the Farm Servant

a cornfield. After that, Ulric had enough to do to hold him in check, and Elisi was dreadfully frightened, so the tender strain could not very well be resumed.

### CHAPTER XVIII

#### ULRIC BECOMES CLEVER IN RECKONING

“The attraction of riches is already too strong.”

THIS little journey to Freuligen had serious consequences for Ulric. He became gradually accustomed to the notion of securing his happiness by marrying a rich wife. For, however foolish and mistaken, it is a common idea that riches and happiness mean the same thing. It is often said: There is a happy man! He has just married a fortune of ten thousand gulden. His wife is a simpleton, it is true, and he has much to bear from her, but he has money, and that is the main thing! Ulric was not free from this delusion, and he thought, from Elisi's behaviour, that she would accept him if he duly proposed for her. Her brother had treated him with friendly confidence, and he probably would not make much objection; or, if his sister *would* marry some one, he might prefer him to another. The parents would be displeased at first, but he would be able to commend himself to them in the end. He was fascinated by the thought of being one day farmer at Steinbrucke, and he often reckoned up to see how rich he would be in twenty years; *he would show the whole neighbourhood what could be accomplished by good farming.* He revolved certain plans in his mind, then fancied to himself what the parson would say when he went to announce his marriage to the rich daughter, *what the people in his old home would say when he should go there in his own chaise, as the possessor of six horses and ten cows, and the best of everything.* It is true that a gloom came over his thoughts

when they turned to Elisi's sickly looks and slovenly ways. She would be of no use in housekeeping; her temper was fitful; she had no notion of order nor economy. But she might improve when she was married, and they would be rich enough to keep plenty of servants. So it would not much matter if she did nothing herself.

All this passed in Ulric's mind only, but the most secret things come at length to light. The journey had made Ulric and Elisi more familiar, and she looked at him as if some understanding existed between them. He certainly avoided these looks, especially when Freneli was near, for though Elisi's riches attracted him more and more, Freneli seemed to him prettier and cleverer every day. It would be best, he thought, to keep Freneli with them to do the housekeeping!<sup>1</sup>

Elisi was so imprudent and unreserved that she might easily have been led to compromise her reputation. But Ulric was honourable; if he wished to earn the hand of his master's daughter, *it was quite against his principles to mislead her*. He worked more zealously than ever, tried to make the estate as productive as possible, that he might commend himself to her parents as one who was not rich, indeed, but who could not fail to become so. He did not think of the terrible words, *He is only a servant!* The servants very soon perceived how matters stood, and more than ever they attributed the zeal of the head-servant to interested motives. Now they tried to thwart him in every possible manner, arranged tricks and surprises, invented wicked stories, and caused him so much annoyance and vexation that he often wished himself a hundred miles away from the Steinbrücke. Elisi's behaviour was so forward and foolish that her parents at

<sup>1</sup> Ulric's cleverness in reckoning does not quite reach so far as to enter into Freneli's mind on the matter;--let us give him at least some credit for his modest dulness. But from first to last Gotthelf carefully keeps him at the low Swiss level which gave cause for the proverb "*Point d'argent, point de Suisse*," while Freneli belongs wholly to the high angelic world, having the heart and mind of which it is written, \**The gold and the crystal shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.*"

## 184      Ulric, the Farm Servant

last observed it. Joggeli grumbled, and said they could see plainly enough now what Ulric was after, but he would put him out in his reckoning. At the same time, he did nothing; and rather enjoyed the idea that it would vex his son greatly if Elisi took it into her head to marry.

The mother laid it more to heart: she represented to her daughter that she was acting wrongly towards Ulric, while making herself talked about in this way; it was most unsuitable for a rich farmer's daughter to give encouragement to the hopes of a servant-man. It was not that she had anything against Ulric, but Elisi would not like to accept a man in his position. Then Elisi began to sob and cry, saying that nothing she did was right for her parents; sometimes she was too proud, sometimes too familiar. Because she said a pleasant word to a servant-man, they treated her as if she had committed a crime. The mother sometimes complained to Freneli that she did not know what to do for the best. As to Ulric, she could not find fault with him, he conducted himself with propriety, and she thought he was not much pleased by Elisi's forwardness. Considering all things, she could not decide to send him away, for if she did so, Joggeli would be the first to reproach her for having deprived him of the best possible servant, on account of her absurd fancies. Meantime Freneli must have an eye to what passed, and tell her if she noticed anything special. But the poor mother found little consolation with Freneli, who seemed quite indifferent when she spoke on this subject.

But Freneli's greatest difficulty lay in her own behaviour towards Ulric, who, being much drawn to her, could not bear her short answers and grave looks, and did all he could to conciliate her. He often avoided Elisi, and certainly never sought her; he sought Freneli, and rarely found her, while Elisi was always accessible. Freneli wished to behave coldly to him, but it was sometimes difficult to her to preserve her dry and distant manner with a man who was so full of kindness and cordiality

towards herself. Sometimes she could not help laughing and talking with him for a few minutes; and if Elisi chanced to be aware of it, terrible scenes ensued.

Of course this affair caused a great deal of talk in the neighbourhood, and many inventions were added to the facts. There were two parties. One grudged the clever Ulric to the parents; the other grudged the rich wife to Ulric. More than a year passed, and the marriage seemed more probable as time went on, so the servants and day-labourers, beginning to believe in it, acted accordingly, and tried to commend themselves to the future master. The consequence was, that the farm became so flourishing, that it would have been impossible to Joggeli to deprive himself of a man who was so skilful in utilising their services. He knew well the meaning of twenty more loads of hay or a thousand more sheaves of corn, which resolved themselves into pieces of money in his purse, so he took good care not to show any dissatisfaction; he said to himself he would avail himself of Ulric's designs as long as possible; when the matter became more serious, he would look into it.

John, the innkeeper, arrived one fine day, and made a great deal of noise about the reports which had reached him; he demanded Ulric's immediate dismissal, but Joggeli would agree to nothing of the kind. As long as he lived he would be master there, and if John had been able to entice Ulric away, he would have thought him everything that was good. What passed at the Steinbrücke was no concern of his, and if they thought proper to give Elisi to the head-servant, he need not trouble himself; anyway, he would not inherit alone from his parents; he had fleeced them enough already. The more John swore and the more passionate he became, the more Joggeli maintained that Elisi should marry, if not Ulric, some one else; and as to John, his relations knew well how affectionately he regarded them; that is to say, that if he could once get hold of their money, he would care very little what became of them, and Elisi would be quite at liberty to marry a gipsy, a heretic, or

## 186      Ulric, the Farm Servant

a Jew. All this in Joggeli's husky, asthmatical voice sounded so alarming, that his wife thought she had better interfere; she said John need not disturb himself about a thing which would never happen; she (the mother) was still there; Elisi would not demean herself, and Ulric was an honourable man. The innkeeper wished to see him, but he was not to be found, and they said he was engaged about the cattle. Trinette had accompanied her husband in a pale yellow costume, still more beautiful than that worn by Elisi during her last visit at Freuligen; she treated her sister-in-law with great contempt, saying to her, Fie! for shame! How common you make yourself! You think of marrying a servant-man! It makes me quite ill; it is a disgrace to the whole family. If my parents could have foreseen it, they would never have consented to my marrying John. They did not like it as it was, but I was foolish, and I would have him. You can never be counted as belonging to the family, and you can't stay here; do you understand? Oh! for shame! I cannot bear to look at you.

But Elisi was not ashamed, and her tongue was quite equal to Trinette's; she said she would do just as she liked; she abused her sister-in-law and attacked her reputation, said she would rather marry a servant-man, than make herself the talk of Freuligen by her misconduct. If the good mother and Freneli had not managed to separate the sisters-in-law, they would certainly have come to blows; and the grass-green and pale-yellow costumes might have suffered in the fray.

John and his wife soon returned to Freuligen. They stopped at inns on the way, and hastened to relate to their good friends what had passed at Steinbrücke, thus giving authority to the current reports.

Shortly after this, Ulric went to a fair to sell a horse; he could not get as much as he wished; so he took him out of the market, and put up at an inn. Whom should he meet there but his old master, Farmer Boden? Ulric put out his hand with undisguised pleasure, and said how glad he was to see him and to have the chance of a

## Ulric's Clever Reckoning 187

little talk with him. The master was less demonstrative, and spoke of being very busy; but at length proposed a bottle of wine with Ulric. He began the conversation by asking if there was much hay about the Steinbrucke. Ulric replied in the affirmative, and inquired in return if the corn at Muhliwald had suffered; a good deal of theirs had been laid by the recent wind. At last, after beating well about the bush, Bodenbauer made up his mind, and said to Ulric, Things go well with you, it seems; I have been told that before long *you* will be the paysan of the Steinbrucke.

Who says that?

Oh, almost every one. It is a general report, and people say it is quite settled.

People always know more than the persons concerned.

But there is something in it? asked Bodenbauer.

I do not pretend that there is not; but all is vague and doubtful, and it is an affair that may be decided either way.

It seems to me that it is high time to decide it some way.

How?

Well, the girl can hardly do otherwise, according to what people say.

It is a wicked calumny, cried Ulric. Did you think for a moment that I would disgrace myself so far as to ensure a rich marriage by such means?

I was mistaken, then, said his old master. I thought you would want me to be your advocate with the parents, and for that reason I was sorry to meet you. I am relieved by what you tell me. I should have been grieved if you had acted basely. But was there not some foundation for the reports?

Yes, said Ulric. I do not deny that Elisi likes me, and I think I could persuade her to marry me if I set myself to it. To speak frankly, I think it would be a rare chance for me.

A rare chance—of a pale, sickly girl who is obliged to



## 188      Ulric, the Farm Servant

go into the house as soon as the wind blows, for fear it should blow her away?

It is true that Elisi is not pretty; she is thin and unhealthy, said Ulric; but the doctor says she will improve when she is married. She will have fifty thousand gulden.

Does she always dawdle about, or can she stir herself, and attend to the housekeeping?

She does not work much, nor cook; but she can knit, and make all kinds of pretty things out of glass beads. But if she had the farm, we could keep a cook, and she need only superintend a little.

Proper superintendence requires knowledge and intelligence. A little help from a mistress does not take the place of clear and capable direction. She might, for example, knit all day in an apothecary's shop without knowing that poisons were being prepared. Besides, I thought that Joggeli's daughter had a cross face, and was not in the habit of receiving visitors graciously?

It is true, replied the poor Ulric, that she is wanting in many ways, and she is very sensitive; but a good husband might arrange accordingly. You must not think that Elisi has never a kind word to say to any one; she can make herself agreeable when she likes. If the farm is worked as it ought to be, it should produce at least ten thousand sheaves of wheat, besides barley and oats.

That is much, said John, and there are few such farms in the canton. But really, if I had the choice of a foolish wife with a fine estate and my liberty without the estate, I should not hesitate for a moment. It is a grand thing to be rich, if you will, but riches do not make happiness; and if a man has an ill-favoured creature at home, who is spiteful and disagreeable about everything, he fears to return, as if the plague were in the house; and if he once begins to seek his happiness elsewhere, he is in a bad way indeed.

But, said Ulric, you have never ceased exhorting me

to save money, telling me that a man can *be* nothing if he *has* nothing.

That is quite true, and I repeat it. It is far better to save money than to spend it in bad ways ; and a man is very worthless who in good times makes no provision in case of need. If he does not begin his career well, he rarely ends well. An honest man who has saved money can marry better than a ragamuffin, and can choose a wife to his taste, but the richest woman is not always the most suitable, and there are some I should prefer without a kreutzer to an heiress of fifty thousand gulden. All depends upon the person. Do as you will, but bethink yourself well before you decide.

It is only too true, said Ulric, that Elisi is thin and sickly, but she may change ; one sees many slender girls who become stout in later life. Besides, she is not really bad. She certainly does not know what she is saying when she is angry ; she reproaches me with courting others, and with being only a servant ; but when the storm is over, she is quite kind and good-hearted. She has given me I don't know how many presents, and I might have had more if I would.

Do as you will, repeated Bodenbauer, but once more I say, Reflect well before you act. So unequal a union is rarely happy, especially in the case of a servant and a master's daughter. I speak because I take a real interest in your fate, and I would not have said so much to another. Now I must go. Come and see us when you have time, and we will talk further of this matter, if it is not too late.

Ulric looked after his late master with great dissatisfaction, and said to himself, I could not have believed that he would grudge me my good fortune, but all paysans are alike ; they cannot bear to see any one rise to their level. John is one of the best, yet he dislikes the idea of his old servant becoming richer than he is. What did it matter to him whether Elisi is ugly or not ? He did not think of beauty only when he chose *his* wife. These farmers

## 190      Ulric, the Farm Servant

consider it a crime if you venture to aspire to one of their daughters, though she might in many cases be happier married to a kind and well-conducted servant-man, than living at home all her life as a farmhouse drudge. But he did not try to turn me from it; things had gone too far for that. There must be an end to this state of things, however; I must not be kept hanging on in this way any longer.

He resolved to tell Elisi that she must speak to her parents, the wedding must be fixed for the autumn, or he would leave at Christmas; he would not be made a fool of.

### CHAPTER XIX

#### HOW A JOURNEY TO A WATERING-PLACE PUT OUT A RECKONING

“Insolent and loveless pride.”

ULRIC considered, as he rode home on the bay horse, whether the farm would really fall to his share, or whether John would leave the inn and take to it. He thought he and his wife were too much accustomed to a public life to be able to live in a place so retired as Steinbrücke. He knew that Joggeli possessed forty thousand gulden, variously invested, and that John had already had several advances,—circumstances which seemed to favour his desires. He began to estimate the incomings of the farm, and the produce of wood and stable; he reckoned the expenses of housekeeping and labour; allowed for bad years, and came to the conclusion, that if he was free from rent and other charges, he could put by, each year, nearly four thousand francs. If God spared him for twenty-five years, he would have the worth of the farm in money at interest, and he would have something to answer to any one who brought up to him his wife's fortune. He could say that there was no merit in inheriting money, but it was something to make fifty

## Journey to a Watering-Place 191

thousand gulden, and Elisi might have taken many a rich man who after twenty-five years would have been rather embarrassed if called upon to produce even as much as she had inherited.

These thoughts made the way seem very pleasant to Ulric, and the bay horse neighed at the stable before he was aware that he was already at home. Elisi soon found him, and inquired what he had brought her. Ulric unfolded papers of figs, almonds, and chesnuts, and at the same time said he should like to know how he stood with her; he could not go on as they were; he made himself the laughing-stock of the neighbourhood. Either they must be married, or he should leave. Elisi said it was for her to say when they should be married: she might fix the following Sunday, if her parents contradicted and vexed her; or if her brother came again and said a single word of reproach to her, she would run at once to the parson to hasten the publication of the banns. But she could not possibly think of such a thing just then: her mother had promised to take her for a week or fortnight to Gurnigel, the famous watering-place. She must have the sempstress, the tailor, the shoemaker; she was quite distracted with all the things she had to think about; she had to go hither and thither to make purchases; how could she possibly prepare for a wedding? When Gurnigel was done with she would see about it.

The mother often said she wished they were already at Gurnigel, or that nothing had been said about going; she thought the girl would lose her senses. When she wished to pack her own things, all the trunks and boxes had already been appropriated by Elisi. She tried at first to induce her to take fewer things, suggested that there was no need for six different costumes, and that two bodices would be quite sufficient, but instead of withdrawing anything, the girl would bring more bodices, more costumes, and underskirts without number. Joggeli had a malicious pleasure in looking on, and advised her to send for a wardrobe from Berne, they had some there which were like small bake-houses, with cupboards and

drawers in them ; she would find one very convenient, and her things would not get crushed. Elisi liked the idea very much, and wished Ulric to go for one immediately, but this was too much for the poor mother, who would not allow it, though Elisi cried and made a great disturbance. The mistress did not wish to be laughed at wherever they went. What would they say at Gurnigel to see them arrive with such luggage, and where could it be placed? It was quite enough to go about with such a simpleton as Elisi, without having also a case as large as a house ! She would not go at all if the doctor had not ordered it, and if she was not afraid the girl would go out of her mind. Her husband was always the same ; instead of checking Elisi, he made a joke of her folly. She knew he would be better pleased if they did not go, and he always grudged her every kreutzer, though she had not come to him empty-handed. Joggeli said she had the girl as she had brought her up, and as she had spoiled her, she must make the best of her.

But, she replied, who buys her such a foolish quantity of fine clothes? Who arranged her stay in French Switzerland, where she picked up so many nonsensical ideas? Certainly not I, but you always like to blame others,—you speak when you ought to be silent, you are silent when you ought to speak.

Ulric could not be well pleased by the journey to Gurnigel, but he had to help in Elisi's preparations for departure. If he hazarded the least objection to anything she wished to take, a fearful storm broke over him. She could see very well what to expect from him in the future, he was already eager to contradict her ! The only thing he could do to restore her to good humour was to make a large case, give it to her to fill, and then send it on secretly to Gurnigel. She promised to talk to her mother about the marriage during their absence, she would give her no peace nor comfort until she consented to it, and the banns should be published at Martinmas.

The mother had now room for her modest requirements. She thought warm clothing might be necessary,

## Journey to a Watering-Place 193

but Elisi was not to be persuaded to take woollen stockings : she declared that she was never cold when she was enjoying herself. The mother provided also a supply of good coffee, which was utterly despised by Elisi, who said they should get better things than coffee at Gurnigel !

Good coffee is the main thing, said the mother ; it is generally bad at such places, and one is glad to have a good cup to offer to an acquaintance.

She remarked also, that instead of so many clothes she would like to take a milch cow with them—she had heard that the cream at Gurnigel was as blue as Elisi's dress !

When the little chest was sent off, Ulric was almost forgotten, and it vexed him very much that Elisi had scarcely time to say goodbye to him, while he held the horse which was to take them as far as Berne, under Joggeli's guidance.

When they were gone, a great calm ensued, which was very pleasant to those who were left behind. Ulric could talk to Freneli without fearing that Elisi would rush out, like a fury, from some remote corner ; and although Freneli was distant with him, she did not avoid him, nor break off their conversations so shortly : only once, when Ulric asked her why she had grown paler and thinner lately, she turned away without answering him. It was a pleasure to see how she managed the house, things went like clockwork, and Freneli might have had wings, she did all so quickly and noiselessly. She had an eye to others, while her own hands were occupied, and she did not think it necessary to have a dirty apron and untidy hair to show how busy she was. She was one of those persons, who, whatever they are doing, are always charmingly neat and clean, while others, on the contrary, never look tidy in spite of all their efforts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yes, but if they make the efforts, are they not rather to be pitied than reproved ? and is it to be expected of *every* girl's head that she should carry the whole day's work clearly in it ? In re-reading this story I find the contrast too violent : Freneli is

## 194      Ulric, the Farm Servant

When she got up in the morning, she had the whole day's work clearly in her head, so that no time was lost in questions and consultations ; she had never to say :

I did not think, I did not remember ! it is so tiresome to bear everything in mind.

Ulric in the farm, and Freneli in the house, fitted in the work so wonderfully, that Joggeli, who could not understand the happy combination of good-will and intelligence, muttered half aloud that there was sorcery in it, and he should be glad when his old woman came back !

Meanwhile, the good mother was at Gurnigel, and Elisi found the place very delightful. The journey had *not* been so delightful ; she had put on her sky-blue dress at Berne ; at Riggisburg, it occurred to her that black would look more genteel, grand ladies often appeared in black silk dresses. But the coachman absolutely refused to unload the carriage ; he swore roundly that he had driven many distinguished parties, and they had never wanted their luggage at Riggisburg. So Elisi had to give up this folly, but she revenged herself by crying and grumbling, until the coachman stopped and begged the ladies to walk up a very steep hill. Elisi refused, and tried to persuade her mother that it was unnecessary. But she was far too sensible a countrywoman to be influenced by Elisi in a point like this : she said she had never in her life driven up such a mountain-side, and it was not the fault of the horses if the driver was a surly fellow, as Elisi called him. She slipped some money into his hand, so that he might not insist on the girl's getting out, and made her way bravely up the hill, panting for breath, and streaming with perspiration.

Elisi's arrival in a sky-blue costume caused great amusement at Gurnigel ; the ladies laughed, till they showed their wisdom teeth, at her singularly fantastic travelling dress, and some of them approached to watch raised above all hope of following her ; and Elisi more wickedly foolish than any daughter of such a mother *could* have been.

## Journey to a Watering-Place 195

the unloading of her extensive luggage. Some of the gentlemen twirled their moustaches, or leaned with both hands on their sticks, as they paused, exchanged glances, and made their various remarks in French, Dutch, and German, interspersed, with loud bursts of laughter.

By whatever means, Elisi was happy in attracting attention ; only two causes somewhat marred her felicity. She did not like being obliged to sit at the burgher's table. If there had been a dressmaker there, she would have at once adopted the costume of a lady, and deserted her mother without any hesitation, in order to place herself at the table of the gentry, at which the peasant costume was not allowed. She often remarked to her mother that she had no appetite amongst those coarse people. In the second place, she thought it very hard to get up so early to drink the waters ; she had begun by staying in bed, but the gentlemen had assured her that no time was like the morning for going to Swartzbrunn, so she exerted herself to get up, in order not to waste her opportunities.

All the gentlemen occupied themselves more or less with Elisi ; they had made her acquaintance during the first day's dancing, and dancing was her one accomplishment. So they were not unwilling to have her as a partner, and to amuse themselves, during the intervals, at her expense. At first they thought she must be one of those sentimental simpletons, who devote themselves to reading ; they spoke to her of Kclair, Kotzebue, and Kramer, of Lafontaine, de la Motte Fouqué, and others ; of Eberhard's Pastelick and Stapfer's Sighs of Love. But they soon found that they were on the wrong tack. Elisi read nothing from one year's end to another ; since she had laid down the catechism at school, and the grammar abroad, she had probably never taken a book into her hands, and it was doubtful whether she could have got through a line correctly. She was occupied solely with herself, her clothes, her looks, her food, her marriage, and she had not a single idea beyond these. She did not pretend to enter into literary conversation,



## 196      Ulric, the Farm Servant

or to know the names of these authors ; the gentlemen were for a moment at a loss, but they cruised about until at last they discovered how acceptable flattery was to this poor foolish creature. She listened with delight to the most bare-faced and extravagant compliments, so that her mother, who was no simpleton, said to her sometimes :

How can you allow them to go on in this way? my girl! they take you for a fool! If any one had talked such stuff to me when I was young, I should have boxed his ears right soundly!

But the affair assumed rather a different aspect, when it was understood that the sickly-looking Elisi was heiress to at least fifty thousand gulden ; they looked at her with other eyes and entertained a sort of respect for her. Fifty thousand gulden! that is no trifle! When the gentlemen were together, they still made game of the girl. But when each was alone, he would reflect on the fifty thousand gulden, place himself before the looking-glass, twirl his moustache, and conclude that though he was still a fine fellow, yet it might perhaps be time to make a move. Then he would revolve in his mind plans for a campaign against the fifty thousand gulden. Here at Gurnigel there were too many people, and he would not make himself conspicuous, but later he would take up the matter seriously, in the meantime he would gently prepare the approaches. So they no longer tried to make Elisi as ridiculous as possible, but rather sought to be agreeable and to recommend themselves to her. They talked of the pleasure of making her acquaintance, and of the happiness of continuing it, asked where they might have the honour of meeting her, and if they might be permitted to pay her a visit some day. Elisi swam in a sea of felicity. Here and there one ventured to try his conversational arts with the mother, but her answers were so exceedingly brief, that he had little encouragement to proceed. The old woman is stupid, he would say, a mere clod of earth! But the mother said, How can you listen to such men, Elisi? I have never known

## Journey to a Watering-Place 197

any so senseless ; they can none of them find anything better to say to me, than do I think the weather will be fine ? and have we done our haymaking ? Our farm lad would be able to talk of something besides the weather and the hay ! These gentry think we country people are so dull, we cannot talk of anything but the weather and the hay, forsooth ! But while these gentlemen were comfortably secure in their leisurely advances, another appeared who adopted a different plan.

There was at Gurnigel that year a grand-looking cotton merchant ; though he had no moustache, he had no lack of gold chains, and his earrings jingled like horse-bells. He was a nimble dancer, and a glib talker. He knew how to address himself to mother and daughter, so as to please both. He entertained the mother with dissertations on the various fabrics of cotton and thread, showing how she could distinguish good from bad, so that she listened to him open-mouthed, and thought to herself how convenient it would be to have such a man beside her when she was making purchases. Then he spoke incidentally of his own affairs, of his large warehouses, of how many thousands he had paid in this or that transaction, so that the good mother was quite impressed. She could not understand how he could get so much money together at once, and thought he must be immensely rich. We also are rich, said she to herself, but we should want time before we could get together such immense sums, and we should be ashamed to borrow even if people were willing to lend. The cotton merchant talked to Elisi of her dress, praised the materials and the colours, but he knew where still better could be procured, and offered to write for the quantity she desired. No counsellor's lady at Berne wore anything to compare to it, and if any one offered him a hundred louis d'or for the material, he should laugh and say what were a hundred louis d'or to him ! Mademoiselle Elise should be the only one in the canton who appeared in this fabric, and he would like to see the eyes which the Berne young ladies would make, when they

## 198      Ulric, the Farm Servant

saw something so distinguished, which they had no means of procuring !

Then he talked also to Elisi about the French canton which she had visited, knew intimately all the places she had been to, could talk of her acquaintances there as if he had just left them, so that Elisi wondered very much that she had never seen nor met him. However, she felt at home with the cotton merchant, and he possessed her full confidence, though the moustaches pleased her better ; she had never seen so many fine gentlemen in her life, Elisi said. They were as straight and upright as if each had just swallowed a walking stick.

But the cotton merchant had his wits about him ; he perceived this leaning of Elisi, and knew well that when a favourable speculation falls in your way, you cannot afford time for hesitation. As the weather was again beautiful, he invited the mother and daughter to make an excursion with him to Blumenstein, a second watering-place in the neighbourhood of Gurnigel. The daughter accepted with eagerness, but the mother made objections : she would like to go very well, but it would cost a great deal—the carriage alone would be very expensive : she would not say no, if she could whistle for one of their six horses at Steinbrucke. But the cotton merchant begged her not to trouble herself about such a trifle, it would be his affair, she must not say anything more. He would spend a far larger sum with the greatest pleasure. The mother at last consented to go, but on the express condition of paying her share : the cotton merchant smiled, and said things could easily be arranged if only the ladies would come, and he begged them to be quite ready to set out at eight o'clock in the morning. He assured them also that the Blumenstein people knew how to cook, whereas at Gurnigel, if they threw something into a saucepan, poured water on it, made a fire underneath and left it, till the dinner bell rang, they concluded that the guests must fare exceedingly well !

The weather was beautiful. It was Sunday : the rather gloomy scene was made cheerful by sunshine, and

its monotony was broken by the number of carriages and pedestrians, hastening to Gurnigel and elsewhere. Our travellers, looking very smart, got into a light carriage, and the handsome horse went through the valley like the wind. The mother's best adornment was the broad, white habit-shirt on her ample breast. The daughter, on the contrary, had a starched chemisette, which stuck up to her chin like a letter-case ; but had she not a black silk dress, and ornaments of gold and silver ?

The gentleman beamed with satisfaction ; his clothes were brilliantly new, he wore yellow gloves, and his boots, stockings, and handkerchief left nothing further to be desired. *He drove like a man who had never had a horse of his own.* The mother was always on the point of holding herself on, and she had an anxious face whenever they passed another vehicle. She said they had never gone at that rate, though they had good horses in their stable—she did not like to overdrive an animal. Besides, if a wheel came off, there was no knowing how far they would go down the slope. He had no judgment, but urged the horse uphill also ; she said she should not like to trust one of theirs to him.

A horse, she added, is certainly not a human being, but just on that account, because he has not reason, men should exercise it for him, and not urge him beyond his strength.

The cotton merchant laughed very much at this old-fashioned consideration for the horse, and proceeded to relate various exploits which showed his own great skill as a driver and manager of horses. He spoke largely of his father's stables, his English and Mecklenburg horses, —thinking to himself, “they do not know that my father went about the country on foot, carrying a pack of calico on his back !”

They were at Blumenstein in a twinkling, and the many guests, assembled in the arbours, watched the arrival of the visitors.

The cotton merchant played his part well : he gave his orders right and left, to the astonishment of the

## 200      Ulric, the Farm Servant

mother, who thought to herself: Well! to be sure! one sees at once that he is Somebody! when he is at home.<sup>1</sup>

\*           \*           \*           \*           \*

It was a beautiful evening when Elisi and her mother returned to the Steinbrucke, and the mother was pleased as every step of the horse brought them nearer. Only for this foolish business, how thankful she would be to arrive! The Gurnigel beds were not like those at home, and if she had not wrapped herself up at night, she would have been frozen to death. She wanted to look at both sides of the road at once; each plot of cabbage and flax, each cherry and apple tree, called for her varied exclamations. See! they are pulling the flax already! or, Look, Elisi! those beans are poor. But Elisi did not take the trouble to look, she was occupied in regretting that her sky-blue costume was shabby, and would only do to wear about home.

I wonder very much, said the mother, if they have watered our cabbages well! Then she questioned the driver about the grass and the corn and the hemp, and exclaimed, See, see, there is our church tower! we shall be at home in a quarter-of-an-hour. Her heart bounded when she saw the first familiar face, and she said: If I had known that we should meet *him* first, I should have bought a present for him also: if I am away again for so long a time, which, please God, shall never happen again, I will buy something to give the first person I know, who meets us on our drive home.<sup>2</sup>

But when they turned into their own estate, the

<sup>1</sup> I omit Gotthelf's bitter caricature of the cotton-merchant's courtship, and easy success. The story was written when first the manufacturing interest was becoming powerful in the northern cantons, and the author used his utmost power against it; but of course in vain. For all the enduring value of the book, enough has already been told of Elisi's folly; and it is time for us to learn why we have had to bear with it so long.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the reader perceives for the first time that Joggeli *has* a heart, though a cross-set one, and has been able to make the old wife feel that there is no place like home.

## Journey to a Watering-Place 201

mother's remarks were made with redoubled interest and eagerness ; and *she was so absorbed by noticing the sparrows busy amongst the peas*, that she scarcely noticed they were driving up to the house. Then Freneli came running out of the kitchen, Ulric from the granary, and Joggeli stood under the projecting roof, leaning on his stick. He *saw his old wife's arrival with much pleasure*, but of course he did not gratify her by saying so. She tried to lift out a bag, but it stuck fast, and Ulric had to get it, while she greeted him and said, Do not forget to set a scarecrow by the peas to-morrow, or the sparrows will make fine work with them. Then she gave her hand to Freneli, and said kindly : Has all gone well ? and have you taken good care of everything ? Then, after she had smoothed her crumpled apron, she stretched out her hand towards Joggeli, and said, God bless you ! How have you been ? I am so glad to be at home again. No one will get me away any more.

Ulric had helped Elisi out, and she had bid him good-evening, adding that he must be careful with the parcels and bring them in at once ; the things must be unpacked, or they would get creased. Coffee was ready indoors, and the mother could not praise it enough. Even if they had tolerable coffee elsewhere, they had not cream like theirs, which made all the difference. She would often have been glad to exchange all the grand dishes at Gurnigel for a cup of good coffee at the Steinbrücke. She praised the bread also and the cheese, and declared that there was no place like home. She had much to say of what she had seen, but the prevailing theme was her gladness in being back again at the Steinbrücke.

## CHAPTER XX

## DOMESTIC WAR

“The soul’s armour is never well set to the heart unless a woman’s hand has braced it; and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honour of manhood fails.”

WHEN Elisi returned, Ulric felt as when a cloud passes suddenly over the sun, or when, in the middle of a confidential conversation, a person enters who brings a sense of restraint. And yet he considered that his good fortune was centred in Elisi, he was glad she had returned, and he wondered how long he should have to wait for the fulfilment of her promises. He was surprised that she did not seek him at the fountain, or in the stable, but he was not vexed; he thought it was one of her whims, and had no doubt that things would settle down as before. His night’s rest was not disturbed by any anxieties.

But elsewhere sleep was not so readily found.

The mother had talked all the evening, and given Joggeli an account of all the incidents of her Gurnigel visit except one, and mentioned many names of persons whom she had met, without once naming the cotton-merchant. It was long since Joggeli had been so sympathising and interested, so she reproached herself for keeping anything back; he must know all without delay. Listen, she added, as she lay down in her own comfortable bed; there is something more to tell you, and I must get it off my mind, or I shall not be able to sleep for thinking of it.

What can it be? Have you spent all the money you took with you?

Almost, she said, but if that were all, I should not mind; it is something quite different; I scarcely dare tell you. At last she made a great effort: It is this:

Elisi has a suitor ; he will come the day after to-morrow to ask you for her ; all is already settled between them.

I will not have it, exclaimed Joggeli, so nothing can come of it ! What a terrible upset John would make ! And what would Ulric say ? He would run away, and how could I manage the farm without him ? I should never get such another servant. It is for Elisi's sake that he stays on, and does not ask for higher wages. I have seen that for a long time.

Would you like him then for son-in-law ? asked the mother.

Certainly not ; *but as long as he has an eye to Elisi*, he will remain, and all will go well. *I may die in the meantime.* Why should I trouble myself about what will happen after I am gone ? Besides, I think Elisi is too proud to take Ulric if no one opposes her. And what has such a cat to do with marrying at all ?

But so it is, said the mother ; this sort of girl is the most bent on it, and there is no knowing what she may do. She has now a gentleman suitor, she will never have such a chance again, and it is too good to be lost.

A gentleman, indeed ! said Joggeli. He must be a rare villain, and a needy one. A real gentleman would not court such an idiot ; he must be hard up, and have no other resource.

Oh ! nonsense ! said the mother ; nothing of the kind ! And she displayed her proofs of the riches of the future son-in-law, his large business, his excellent establishment.

Plenty of lies are soon told, said Joggeli. If he is rich, he must be a fool himself to want such a simpleton ; he would choose a prettier girl, and not select one who sets food on the table as if it had been clawed together by a cat !

Oh ! you are quite mistaken, said the mother ; he was the cleverest man at Gurnigel ; he knows where cotton comes from, and understands all fabrics ; he can tell the difference between the Langthal ell and that of Berne. He explained many things which no one ever made clear to me before. And he told me so much about



## 204      Ulric, the Farm Servant

weaving, that he made me open my eyes. I shall look after our weavers now, I can tell them! He is quite a different sort of man to those sticks from Bérne, the officers who twirl their moustaches and lean on their sticks, saying, I think the sun will shine to-day even yet.

Let him be what he will, said Joggeli, he is a gentleman, and I will not give Elisi to a gentleman. If he were a farmer's son, it might be different, he could come to us, I need not give him anything, and Ulric might go where he would. But I do not want a gentleman on my estate. I would rather go and beg my bread. He would want a considerable dowry, too. I know well how gentlefolks chaffer about a daughter's portion, just as butchers do about the price of calves; if they once get hold of a farmer, they think the more they ask, the more he will appreciate the honour of being connected with them.

He talked of the frequent help he was obliged to give his son, and declared that his capital would soon dwindle to nothing if he had to give a marriage portion handsome enough to satisfy another gentleman. Then the farm would not be sufficient to keep them, and they would have to go elsewhere. When people are old they do not like change, and poverty for their declining days. You might have been clever enough to think of that, he added, but a woman always loses her head when there is any talk about a wedding.

You are always so unreasoning, said the mother. I could not prevent this affair; they made it up between themselves before they said anything to me; and if it does not please you, have it out with Elisi, and see what can be done.

It is very fine, replied Joggeli, to get into a difficulty, and then leave it to other people. I declare to you that I will not meddle with this affair, and I have nothing more to say about it. You may get out of it how you can.

The mother repeated to him that it had not been her doing; he was Elisi's father; he had only to break off

the engagement if he objected to it, and not to urge *her* into action, while he retired into the background. This time she would do nothing whatever, and she wished him good-night,—a wish which was not fulfilled for either of them.

Not far off another conversation was going on. Elisi had a nice bedroom of her own, but she generally shared that of Freneli. As soon as they were alone together, she began: Oh! if you only knew something, but I will not tell you. There is no occasion for you to know everything.

Freneli thought she referred to some new costume or bodice, and did not trouble herself much with guessing. But Elisi gave her no peace, so at last she became impatient and said she had better be silent or say what it was.

What shall you say if some one comes in a fine carriage and asks to marry me?

What shall *I* say? said Freneli. Ask Ulric what *he* has to say about it.

I need not ask him; he has not to dictate to me. You may have him yourself as far as I am concerned. You will have been finely taken up with him during my absence. But it is all alike to me. What is a servant-man to me? Try now to get him. You have wanted him for a long time. I am provided with another.

For shame of yourself, said Freneli, to talk so! When have I ever made advances to any men, servants or others? I defy you to say that I have. Though I am not a rich daughter, I should be ashamed to do so. No one has a right to say insulting things to me, and least of all *you*! Keep what you have got. I want nothing with your Ulric, nor any other.

My Ulric! I have no Ulric. What is our servant-man to me? Have you not heard that I have a rich and handsome suitor at Gurnigel? I am engaged to him, and he is coming in a day or two. How you will open your eyes!

Don't talk such nonsense, said Freneli. You cannot

## 206. Ulric, the Farm Servant

take me in! Don't I know that you are engaged to Ulric?

Hush with your stupid Ulric! Don't you understand that I will not have him? I never thought seriously of him. Ah no! Such a rich man! such a handsome man! I shall live in town, and be dressed quite differently. I will give you all the clothes which I shall not be able to wear.

Do stop with your chatter, said Freneli. I pay no attention to it.

You will soon make me angry, said Elisi. Ask my mother if it is not true.

And Ulric? asked Freneli.

What is Ulric to me? I have told you already. It would be hard if one could not look at any one without being obliged to marry him.

But you have not only looked at him; you have promised to marry him, answered Freneli.

Why was he fool enough to believe me? Is it my fault? Men often jilt girls, and it is as well that they should occasionally have their turn and be left in the lurch themselves.

You are utterly worthless! said Freneli. Then she drew the bedclothes over her ears, and replied no more to Elisi's talk.

On the following morning there was a truce. Neither of the contending parties meddled with the other. The mother went round amongst the servants, giving them presents, and telling them not to show them to the rest, as they might be jealous; but in the course of an hour, every one knew what the others had received, and many cross looks and sharp words were exchanged, so impossible is it, with the best intentions, to please everybody.

Elisi unpacked, and talked a great deal with the maids, who had to help her at every turn. After she had shown the treasures which she had brought home, she gave them to understand that she had made a far grander acquisition at Gurnigel, and in a few hours, the whole household knew that Elisi had a rich and dis-

tinguished suitor, and that she would have nothing more to say to Ulric.

As to the unconscious Ulric himself, he went through his ordinary work without the least suspicion, and proceeded quietly after dinner to the forge for the shoeing of the horses. When he returned in the evening, he was aware of strange looks and mysterious whispers; he met eyes full of pity or of derision; he thought the mother and Freneli had never been so kind to him, but Elisi avoided, and seemed not to see him. He was much puzzled, and did not receive the mortifying explanation until he questioned the boy who shared his room at night. The boy hesitated some time before telling him that Elisi was to marry a terribly rich, handsome gentleman, that he was coming the next day, and she wished to have nothing more to say to Ulric. He asked how he knew; and the boy replied that Elisi had boasted of it to the maids, who had repeated it all over the house. There must be something in it, for the master had looked very cross, and not spoken a word to the mistress all day; also they had heard their voices late into the night.

This was a great blow to Ulric, and he could scarcely believe it. He thought Elisi could not possibly be so bad. Had she not given her word and promise, and had not the advances been on her side? Then he remembered her hesitation and delays and her present behaviour. Still he thought she could not treat him so abominably. Was this to be the reward of his honesty and industry? He had saved many thousand gulden for the master, and he had for thanks nothing but mockery and scorn. Every one knew of the affair; he should be a laughing-stock, and not dare to show his face. What would become of him? All his fine dreams fell to pieces during that long night. They venture to trifle with me, he thought, because I am only a servant. It is as if a curse lay on the word, and it is vain to try to escape from it. My master might well preach! he wanted a good servant; that was all. What have I got

## 208      Ulric, the Farm Servant

by being one? Contempt and disappointment. And yet it might not be true. The whole story might be empty talk and a trick of the girls. He would have a clear understanding the next day; if he could not see Elisi, he would go straight to the mistress, and if her reply were not satisfactory, he would not remain an hour longer at Steinbrücke.

It was some time before he had the desired opportunity. At last he saw Elisi in the garden, dressed up very much, and selecting the prettiest flowers. He did not hesitate, but stood beside her before she was aware of his approach.

Why do you always avoid me? he asked. What is the meaning of it?

Oh, nothing, said Elisi.

But why do you behave to me in that way? why have you no kind word for me? asked Ulric.

Have I not a right to behave as I choose? If I choose it, it is nothing to you!

So that is what it means, said Ulric. Then it is true that you have another suitor?

And if I have, what is it to you? I do not concern myself because you have been courting Freneli.

As to that, there has been nothing which every one may not know. But I must say that you are a bad wench to take another when you were engaged to me!

My goodness gracious! Now the good-for-nothing fellow calls me wench, howled Elisi. Will you let me alone, you servant-man, you? or I will call my father and mother.

Call whoever you please, said Ulric. You are the most contemptible creature on the face of the earth if what people say is true. But it is not true, Elisi, is it?

Why should it not be true? If I can have a rich man in a better position, why should I take you? That would be silly. But do not be angry. I will put in a good word for you, and he will take you into his business, and then you can make your fortune without work.

While Elisi spoke, a handsome chaise, with a well-dressed gentleman inside, drove in front of the house. When she saw him, she cried, There he is ! there he is ! and ran to meet him. The mother stood at the door, and rubbed her hands on her apron with some embarrassment. Joggeli was nowhere to be seen, and Ulric stood in the garden, like Lot's wife when her limbs stiffened at the sight of the burning city. He scarcely knew what he was doing, still less what he should do. He had seen almost unconsciously that Elisi had received the visitor and led him into the best parlour. Then he clenched his fist and said, I will certainly let him know what sort of a creature he has got. Then I will go. I will not stay an hour longer.

As he was about to spring with one bound from the garden to the terrace, he was held fast by his shirt-sleeve. Turning round angrily to free himself from this unexpected check, he saw Freneli standing near him, not frightened, but holding him fast. He did not pull, now ; but said impatiently, Let me go.

No, I will not let you go, said Freneli. You may be vexed, but you shall not go. I am sorry for you, Ulric. Elisi has treated you shamefully, but show now that you can control yourself. Stay on, as if you were quite indifferent and unconcerned ; that will vex Elisi the most. If you are violent, she will mock at you ; and I should not like that, if I were in your place.

For a long time Ulric could not see this, and complained bitterly of Elisi's treatment.

Be glad of it, said Freneli. I have not liked to speak until now, but you may thank God upon your knees for the escape you have had. If you knew Elisi as I do, you would not take her if the whole world belonged to her.

That may be as it will, said Ulric. I will leave immediately. The new son-in-law may work the farm.

That would be the worst thing you could do. You would set everybody talking and laughing about the affair. Some would say you had been sent off, others that you had been made a fool of ; you fancied you were

## 210      Ulric, the Farm Servant

going to be farmer of Steinbrucke, forsooth ! Go on as if you were exactly suited, and people will not know what to make of it. They will not only let you alone, but say, It is plain now that Ulric was not so silly as he seemed ; he has befooled *them*, and not they *him*.

You have a wise tongue, said Ulric, but I will be hanged if I stay here as servant any longer than——

“Than you have agreed for,” added Freneli. “You can go at Christmas. Perhaps I shall go also. But do not go now ; do not grieve the mother, and me.<sup>1</sup> What would Elisi care if you left ? On the contrary, it would be just what she would like : the whole burden would fall on my cousin and me, and the master would do nothing but grumble. How can either of us help what has happened ? But you would surely have been miserable ; and this gentleman will be so, you may depend upon it, though perhaps they deceive each other. Now go into the stable and feed his horse, as if you were quite satisfied. I am certain this is your wisest course. People get through the world better if they do not always show what they feel.”

You may be right, said Ulric, a little cooled by this long conversation, but if a man could not give way to his anger sometimes, he would burst. It is quite right to show what one thinks of such conduct.

“You can do that best by staying here, and far more effectually than by an immediate outbreak of indignation. Necessity has taught me that bursts of passion do not accord with the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove. Go now to you work. *I*—must cook and roast for the gentleman, and I shall do it with the greatest pleasure.”

Thus far Gottkelf. What I want the reader to note on this sentence of Freneli's,—the first in which her

<sup>1</sup> See terminal note on this sentence of Freneli's ; the rest is clear enough as she speaks it ; the piece needing care is just the little bit “Do not grieve the mother, and *me*.” But I have given the whole inverted commas for once.

entire character is told,—may perhaps be read with more patience if I give it in the print of the text.

I have already said (p. 193) that the character of Freneli is too complete to be exemplary,—or even, in the common world, credible; for Gotthelf has joined in it the three perfections of womanly grace, of womanly honour, and of pure intellect; nevertheless, women of her type, and even coming near her standard, are frequent in the Bernese, Uri, and Tyrolese Alps; and in dedicating the pansy of the Wengern Alp to her,<sup>1</sup> I meant to indicate at once the relation of her noble strength to her mountain land, and the peculiar sadness and patience in sorrow which invest her, even through the happiest scenes of her life, with the purple robe of the kings and queens who reign at once in earth and heaven.

But the two points of character in which she is eminent above even these gracious women, such as they are generally, are her frankness,—and yet command of her lips. Many very noble women are subtle, reserved, or inexplicable even to themselves; they know not their own hearts, or the tendency of their own thoughts. But Freneli knows, always, not her own mind merely, but her power, capacity, sensibility; knows how truly she can love, how unweariedly she can labour, how faithfully she can keep the Law, and receive the Gospel, of Christ.

And farther, she is frank and simple to the uttermost, even to those who are seeking her destruction. She never deigns to deceive, never loses in anger the peace, or in jealousy the sweetness, of her life and conduct. She expresses neither indignation nor pride to the lover who has left her, asks for no atonement on his return, speaks of her own affection to him as quietly as if it were a sister's, and trusts to his respect for it to guard him against imprudent contest with his own fortune. "Do nothing," she says, "that would grieve the mother, and *me*."

<sup>1</sup> Proserpina, vol. ii., p. 33. Compare Fors, vol. viii., p. 248.



## 212     Ulric, the Farm Servant

It must always remain a question how far the women who have this perfect power alike over their affections, and the expression of feeling, differ in the elements of their nature from those whose passions possess and conquer *them*. Alike Scott, Gotthelf, and Miss Edgeworth, assume that noble training and right principle can always give the power of self-command. But in the sequel of this very story it will be seen that Freneli comes of a rugged stock, and has innate strength far above that of ordinary women. Shakespeare allows the passion always to conquer in the most lovely natures; but it is of little use for lessoning in daily life to study the thoughts or ways of maidens who are always dukes' daughters at the least. Indeed, in returning to my Shakespeare after such final reading of the realities of life as may have been permitted me, (dazzled too easily, and too often blind) it grieves me to find in him no laborious nor lowly ideal; his perfect shepherdess is a disguised princess, his Miracle of the white island exultingly quits her spirit-guarded sands to be Queen of Naples, and his cottage Rosalind is extremely glad to get her face unbrowned again. His law for all these high ladies, however, is that they are conquered by love in an instant; and confess it as soon as they have the chance: while even with Scott and Miss Edgeworth, reserved as the affection may be, it is always deeper than their lover's, and usually anticipates it; but never conquers their own character, or for an instant shakes their purposes.

We will take up the question again, after we have seen how Freneli carries herself to the—not bitter—end.

## CHAPTER XXI

THE BETROTHAL IS FOLLOWED BY DISQUIETUDE INSTEAD  
OF PEACE

“Life is . . . become difficult to the honest.”

WHEN the suitor was gone, and the old couple were left to their own reflections, they felt anxious and heavy-hearted. What will Ulric say? What will John say? How will it all turn out? These questions disturbed them. They were rudely shaken out of the quietness of their ordinary life. To their great astonishment, Ulric said nothing, and acted with as much indifference as if he was quite unconcerned. When his fellow-servants tried to draw him out, he smiled in a peculiar manner, so that they were entirely at a loss. This tranquillity, which he at first assumed, soon became real; he felt as if he had been awakened from a most oppressive dream. He had been dazzled by the thought of the money and the estate; he had been blind to Elisi's personality. Now he could breathe freely, and see clearly; he was approaching the standpoint from which he must thank God for his escape. He realised more and more the misery of such a marriage; he began to understand his old master, and many a time he wished he could ask him to forgive his mistrust of his truly kind and wise advice. At the same time, he was quite determined to give up his place; he only waited for an opportunity to say that he should not remain. The situation would not be desirable with such a rascal as the son-in-law, and that the cotton-merchant was a rascal, his own conscience told him all the more plainly as he became fully aware why he himself had wanted the girl. He was convinced that if the gentleman had had the twentieth part of the means he pretended, he would never have thought of marrying Elisi.

John and his wife did not take the matter so coolly.

## 214      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Elisi wished to go and tell them the news and display her watch and chain, but neither of her parents would go with her, and she had not courage to venture alone. So a letter was despatched, and the pair arrived like a bomb-shell, which immediately burst and exploded.

There was no offensive name which John did not give to the bridegroom, no vice which he did not impute to him, no curse which he did not lay upon him; and Trinettes, in the midst of her tears and sobs, supplemented John's abuse.

Elisi did not spare her tongue, and her brother would have beaten her if the mother had not interfered.

You have it now, said Joggeli; you see how it is; and I have to help to drink the beer which you have brewed.

John swore with fearful oaths that he would never again set foot in his father's house if he accepted such a scamp as son-in-law. Then he sought Ulric, and used similar language; he declared that if such a creature as Elisi must needs have a husband, he would a hundred thousand times rather have Ulric for his brother-in-law than that rascal, half scamp, half gentleman. And how badly you have been treated; have you not? I wish you would come to me. But you will come yet. You will not stay in this cursed hole.

Ulric answered evasively, and was heartily glad when John drove away in the direction of his inn.

The only result of the poor man's exertions on this day was, that his wife beset and tormented him until he gave her a watch and chain like those of her sister-in-law.

Joggeli's inquiries received unfavourable, evasive, or superficial answers. Some said the cotton-merchant was an adventurer, who could not be trusted. He seemed very ready to spend, but not so ready to pay. Others said they knew nothing accurately about him, as they had no personal dealings with him: others that he was a pleasant, clever young man, who was sure to make his way, and they thought he had good means. As the decisive moment approached, the hearts of the parents became heavier and heavier, especially that of the good

mother, whom Joggeli held responsible for all their trouble.

We will pass over the details of the wedding which followed, for our business is really with Ulric, and we have been already too long detained with this secondary personage. But when the cotton-merchant had once appeared, we could not, on account of his innate pertinacity, get quickly rid of him; and even now, after fixed resolve, we have great difficulty in shaking him off.

Ulric's silent and calm demeanour seemed very strange, though not unpleasing, to the old couple. When the stir of the wedding was over, the mother urged Joggeli to ask him if he would remain, and say that they all wished him to do so. Joggeli said if he did not, it would be her fault; there was a better one to be had: the son-in-law had promised them one; but they were accustomed to Ulric, and it would be quite right for him if he stayed; still he should not hang himself if he went. You are always the same simpleton, said the old woman, and went out of the room.

One day, when Ulric was cutting some grass, Joggeli hobbled up to him, and said he supposed they were going on as usual, and he intended to stay.

No, master, said Ulric; I will leave. You must look out for another.

But what do you want? said Joggeli; more wages again? or has John enticed you away from me?

Neither, said Ulric.

Then why will you leave?

Oh, one cannot always stay in the same place, said Ulric.

And if I give you four thalers on it? asked Joggeli.

I would not stay for a hundred. I have been insulted, and no money shall keep me.

Joggeli went back to the parlour, and said to his wife, You have it now; Ulric will not stay. Go and look for another; I will have nothing whatever to do with it. When the wife asked, Why? what did he say? Joggeli would tell her nothing; she might ask him herself. And

## 216 · Ulric, the Farm Servant

when she said, What shall we do now? he retorted, There, you see! I told you from the beginning how it would be!

She did not question further. She went to the kitchen to the industrious Freneli, who was her confidante in all her domestic affairs, and said, Only think of it! Ulric says he will leave us. Do you know the reason?

Not exactly, said Freneli; but Elisi made him very angry; he will think that he has been insulted, and not wish to work all his life for such a poor return.

But what shall we do now? said the mother; we shall never get such another. He is well-mannered, godly, industrious; everything goes smoothly; one hears no contentions. If he goes, all will be changed. I dare not think of it.

Nor I either, said Freneli. I should not like to be here when all is so different. I am sorry, cousin, but I take this opportunity of telling you that I cannot remain—I also wish to leave.

You also? What have I done to grieve you? You have an understanding with Ulric.

No, cousin, said Freneli; I have no understanding with Ulric; we have nothing to do with each other. And you have done nothing to grieve me, cousin; you have always been a mother to me; when everything has been against me, you have taken my part. I shall never forget it as long as I live; and as long as I can pray, I will beseech the dear Lord to make up to you all that you have done for me.

Freneli cried, and large tears rolled down the mother's red cheeks as she took her hand, and said, But why, you foolish maid, must you go away if you love me, and I have done nothing to grieve you? I am accustomed to you, and you have done everything to please me. If I mentioned a thing, it was done as soon as said. How can I manage the burden of housekeeping when I am getting older every day? and I shall soon be good for nothing.

Cousin, I am sorry, said Freneli, but I must leave. I

have vowed that I will not bear Elisi's abuse every time she comes with her husband. She would always accuse me of wishing to attract him, and reproach me with being kept out of charity. I told her I should be out of the way, and be no more continually taunted.

Ah, said the mother, you must not mind Elisi ; you know she has always been unmanageable, and it is no matter what she says. Why do you make me suffer for it?

God knows ! I cannot say, said Freneli. Why can no one keep Elisi in subjection ? I must go out of her way. And there is another thing which I would only say to you : her husband, the impudent scamp, comes about me more than is necessary. I shudder at the thought of his touching me. He had better take care of himself ; if he comes too near, I will give him a blow which will send him flying. Ah, cousin, it would not be good for me to live here. I could not do so any longer. The son-in-law behaves as if he had a right to command, and the farm was already his own.

This was, indeed, too true. He had observed the rich abundance which prevailed in the housekeeping—a quart of milk, a pound of butter, a loaf more or less did not signify ; there was no lack of ordinary frugality, but no count was kept of the eggs, and much food was given away to the poor. He had many a time reckoned up to Joggeli what he might sell, shown him that the estate only yielded two per cent., and represented that if he turned the produce into money and invested it in his business, it would bring him in at least eight per cent. After these interviews Joggeli grumbled to his wife, and urged her to check this easy and bountiful expenditure. The gentleman was surprised when his father-in-law showed him rich stores in his chests and granaries ; he remarked that a considerable capital was locked up in these things, which was bearing no interest, but rather diminishing in value. If he would sell only the superfluity at a favourable moment, he would guarantee that it would bring him in at least two thousand gulden ; he

## 218 · Ulric, the Farm Servant

must not, of course, sell to the little second-hand country traders, who wanted about fifty per cent. for themselves, but direct to the first purchaser.

In this way he had talked them out of their yarn, their flax and linen, their corn and cherry brandy; and the good mother's heart ached, and her eyes filled with tears, as she looked into the empty chests. I have never been so bare of stores since I began housekeeping. God save us from a season of scarcity! I do not know what we should do; we have nothing beforehand. The son-in-law brought flourishing accounts of successful sale, but no money. He said carelessly that he had given the usual half-year's credit. Joggeli could have dispensed with this adherence to custom.

And the good mother's spirit was overwhelmed. Ulric and Freneli were going to leave. The son-in-law held the reins of command. She had to do the housekeeping upon nothing, to stint the poor, to render an account of each measure of meal, of each batch of cakes. She felt so miserable that she was obliged to sit down and cry, so that even Joggeli went to her and begged her to calm herself; every one would hear her, and know what was the matter; she must not mind what he had said; he had not meant her to take it amiss. Freneli also comforted her, and said she must not grieve; things might go more easily than she feared. But she shook her head, and begged them to leave her; no talking helped her; she must regain her composure by thought and reflection. She went about silently, as if she had a great weight on her heart, sat down occasionally when she thought herself unobserved, rested her hands on her knees, or wiped away some silent tears with the corner of her apron.

After some days she appeared relieved, the shadows seemed to vanish, and she said that her heart felt less sorrowful, but she would like to go away for a little change; she could not feel cheerful, and she should recover better if she could spend a day or two in another place.

Joggeli had nothing to object to this; even *he* had

been grieved to see her so sorrowful ; she might go either to her son or her daughter, and Ulric had plenty of time to drive her.

She replied that she did not wish to go to either, their disputes and discontent would give her no rest, and if she took sacks of new thalers, they would think they got too little. She preferred going to pay her long-promised visit to her cousin Bodenbauer. She had never been in that direction, and the sight of new scenes would turn her thoughts from her troubles. Also she should take Freneli with her ; she had not been away for a long time. She had kept house at Elisi's wedding, and it was only right that she should have her turn.

Joggeli had a great deal to object to this latter arrangement, but he gave in this time on his wife's account, and made up his mind to bear the inconvenience of Freneli's absence also.

Ulric rejoiced when he heard that he was to drive the mistress to Farmer Boden's. Freneli, on the contrary, resisted for a long time, had a hundred reasons against going, and only yielded when the cousin said, You are very tiresome. To cut the matter short, I tell you, you are to come.

## CHAPTER XXII

### OF A SECOND JOURNEY, WHICH ALSO LEADS TO UNEXPECTED EVENTS

“The woman's intellect is for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision.”

It was a Saturday morning, a beautiful autumn day early in November, when the black horse was harnessed by active hands, and the chaise was brought before the door. Ulric, in Sunday clothes, placed himself on the box with a grand air, whip in hand. Not long after,



## 220      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Freneli came, fresh and beautiful as a spring morning, with a little nosegay in the front of her bodice. She placed her packages inside, and then the mistress appeared, accompanied by Joggeli, and giving him numberless parting directions.

People will think it is a wedding, said Joggeli, when they see you driving about the country on a Saturday. Freneli looks exactly like a bride.

Such folly! said Freneli, and blushed over face and neck.

Ulric must have a nosegay too; then every one will think so, said a pert maid, who snatched off Ulric's hat, and ran with it into the house.

Mädi, give back the hat, said Freneli, angrily. What does Ulric want with a posy? Do not venture to touch a flower.

When Mädi did not choose to hear, Freneli wanted to spring from the carriage, but the mother, shaking with laughter, held her fast and said, Let it be. It is only fun. Perhaps they will take *me* for the bride. Who knows?

The whole household took part in the joke, and laughed at the anger of Freneli, who would not let herself be pacified, while Ulric entered into the sport, and put his hat jauntily on his head. Freneli tried to snatch at it, in order to take out the bunch of flowers, but the mother said she must not be so silly. It really was not such a terrible thing if they were taken for a bridal pair.

But she would not have it, Freneli said. She took out her own nosegay, and would have flung it away if the mother had not said, You must not go on in that violent way! The girls who make such a fuss are those who are the most anxious for a husband.

I certainly am not, said Freneli. I want no simpleton, such as they all are.\* I do not know what I should do with one.

Oh, like others, most probably, said the mother, laughing heartily as they drove off with the incensed Freneli in the keen morning air.

The withered leaves hung on the trees in all their pomp of colour, and in the ground beneath them the young seeds sprang up green and fresh, and sparkling with the dewdrops which hung on the tips of their slender blades, and the mysterious misty sky stretched broodingly over all. Black crows flew over the land; green woodpeckers clung to the trees; nimble squirrels ran across the road,<sup>1</sup> and were the next moment peeping curiously at the passers-by from the security of a lofty branch; the wild geese sailed high in air, in their well-ordered triangle, passing to a warmer land, while their strange departing notes were heard in the far distance.

The mother's sensible eye took cheerful note of everything, and many wise remarks were exchanged between her and Ulric. Especially when they were driving through villages, things crowded on their notice; and there was scarcely a house which did not give occasion to some observation.

It is no good always to stick fast at home, said she; one sees always the same things. One should drive about the country from time to time, not from curiosity merely, but to learn something. People do things differently in different places, and one can choose the best method.

After a time, she told Ulric to stop at the next inn; the horse might want something, and she would be glad of refreshment herself; she was rather cold.

She told Ulric to come in when the horse had had his oats. They were surprised that it was not later by that clock. The hostess dusted the chairs with her apron, brought wine, and apologised for the delay with the tea. The mother sent Freneli with a further invitation to Ulric.

When he was there, and they had drunk to each other's health, the hostess began to talk, and said they had already had another wedding-party there that morning. Then the mother had a hearty laugh, Ulric laughed also,

<sup>1</sup> All this *was* so, in the sweet, quiet, half-wild, kindly and calmly inhabited Bernese lowlands once. - J. R.

## 222      Ulric, the Farm Servant

but Freneli became very red and angry, and said, The roads are not for wedding-parties only ; other people have also a right to drive on Saturdays !

The hostess said she must not be offended, she did not know them, and she thought how well they suited each other ; she had not seen such a handsome couple for a long time.

The mother assured the hostess she need not apologise, they had already had a hearty laugh about it at home, they had thought how it would be, and the girl had been very angry about it.

It is not kind of you, cousin, to help to plague me, said Freneli. I would never have come if I had known.

No one plagues you, said the cousin, laughing. You are so silly ! Many a girl would be delighted to be taken for a bride.

But I am not, and if I am not let alone, I will run away home.

You cannot shut people's mouths, and you may be glad if they say nothing bad of you, answered the cousin.

It is bad enough for them to mix up my name with one that I do not want, and who does not want me.

Freneli had for some time been anxious to go ; at last the horse was put in, and they drove off again. The mistress often told Ulric not to urge the horse ; she would not like him to take any harm. When she heard that they were a league from Erdöpfelkof, she gave orders to stop at the next inn ; there they would have some dinner. She was hungry, and she would not like to arrive at Cousin John's just at dinner-time ; it would put them about too much. It would be more convenient and pleasant to arrive there in the afternoon ; coffee would be soon prepared, and they should enjoy it.

Ulric obeyed, drove up to the inn, and was courteously received by the waiting-maid. She showed them into a room, saying, as she opened the door, Go in,—there are already two parties there. And from inside they heard

the words, This is good ; here comes another wedding couple. The cousin laughed so that she shook all over. You see, it is to be a wedding, do what you will.

No one shall get me to go in, said Freneli, now downright angry ; and if it is to be like this all day, I will go home on foot. And it is not kind of you, Ulric, not to be more sensible, and to take the nosegay out of your hat. Not that it means anything.

Then Ulric said that he did not wish to vex her ; he had taken it as a joke ; he would gladly give her the nosegay, and if she wished to go home, he would soon drive the black horse there, he was sure.

Freneli took the nosegay, and said, Thank you.

But the cousin said, I would not have given it to her. You need not be ashamed of each other.

Once for all, cousin, be it as it may, I will hear no more about it, and I will not go in to the wedding-parties. If you will not come with me into the public room, I will run home immediately, exclaimed Freneli.

What a girl that is ! said the cousin. Really, Ulric, if I were you, I should be vexed with such talk.

He may for me ! said Freneli ; but I should have thought Ulric was too sensible to enjoy such foolishness.

Only wait, Freneli, said the cousin ; you will think differently some day. It is, after all, a fine thing to be a bride.

A fine thing ! continued Freneli. I think dying is preferable to marrying. Death is to the blessed the gate of heaven, but marriage may open the door to the greatest misery. You may think that all is bright and hopeful, the air may seem full of music, and, after all, you may be going to disappointment and despair.<sup>1</sup>

Oh, girl, said the cousin, you talk just like that beggar who said she would not like to be a farmer's wife because the food was too coarse for her, and who was found immediately afterwards in the cellar, trying to steal a whole basketful of it. Beware of such talk ; we are

<sup>1</sup> A wonderful bit of true Freneli.

## 224      Ulric, the Farm Servant

responsible for our words, even when we are angry ; we never know what will happen ; and if we come into the position we have forsworn, these foolish words rise up like ghosts to torment us.

Cousin, said Freneli, I do not wish to vex you, nor you either, Ulric, but let me alone. I am only a poor girl. I must take care of myself, and not let myself down.<sup>1</sup>

My dear child, said the woman, who has the least thought of slighting you ? Many a rich daughter would be glad to resemble you ; and I would give a great deal if Elisi were like you. You would make a man happy, were he poor or rich. You are fit for any position, and Elisi (God help her !) is good for nothing. I cannot understand how it is. I brought you both up, and you are entirely different. *Whatever you touch goes rightly.* If I were a young man, I should say *you*, and no other. But whatever Elisi takes in hand, she does awkwardly, and my anxieties about her will bring me to my grave.

The good mother's tears came to her eyes. Freneli, *who thought to herself that two girls might be brought up in the same place, by the same person,—and yet differently,* tried to comfort her by the hope that things would turn out better than she thought. But she shook her head, and said she had hoped Elisi would set to work and improve when she was married, but she did not ; she sat all day with her hands before her like a fine lady ; she was a simpleton, and would remain one all her life long. It would be well for her if she could do the tenth part of what Freneli did. *Freneli turned things out of hand as if by magic. If Elisi had to dust a chair, she would be all day about it, and lie in bed the next day to rest herself.* The beds were often unmade in the afternoon, and at nine o'clock in the evening they did not know what was to be for supper. It put her out of all patience to see it.

<sup>1</sup> Quite heavenly, all this piece from "A fine thing ! continued Freneli," to the close of the scene. I don't like italics, but must say a word or two yet of Freneli's "magic" in my general notes on the education of working girls, for which I mark these passages.

But say nothing about it at home, she added ; I should not like it to be talked of.

Freneli had recovered ; the praise had done her good ; she did not exactly know why. She chatted, discussed the food, and even joked Ulric, pretending that his glass and his plate were always empty. The mistress also forgot her motherly griefs, and they drove merrily off towards Bodenbauer's.

Ulric had then much to tell as to the owners of the houses and lands. His heart bounded when he saw the first field which belonged to his old master ; all the work he had done on it came back to his mind ; he pointed it out from a distance, and showed its peculiarities. When they arrived at the house, the household was assembled outside, under the projecting roof, making sour-kraut. All raised their heads at the unexpected carriage, and at first they did not know them ; then they cried, It is Ulric ! it is Ulric ! and the children sprang forward to meet him.

Then John said, Here is the cousin's wife from Steinbrucke ! I wonder why *she* has come !

He and his wife bid them kindly welcome, and Eisi said, God greet you, Ulric. Do you bring us your wife ?

Now you hear ! said the cousin, laughing again heartily. It is to be, whether you will or not ; every one says the same.

They take us everywhere for a wedding-party, explained Ulric, because we are driving together on a Saturday, when so many newly married couples are on the roads.

Yes ; and not only that, said John, but it seems to me you do not suit each other badly.

Listen, Freneli, said the mother ; Cousin John thinks so too ; there is no use in holding out against it any longer.

Freneli, half laughing and half crying, between amusement and vexation, controlled herself because of the on-lookers, and answered that she had always heard it took two to make a wedding ; but in this case neither of them

## 226      Ulric, the Farm Servant

desired it, so she did not see how anything could be made of it.

What is not may be, said John's wife.

Freneli made no reply, but gave her hand again to the farmer and his wife, and apologised for having come ; she said the mistress would have it so, and she hoped they would not think that she had made too free.

The housewife said she was very glad to see her, and invited them all to go in ; but they preferred remaining outside, it was so fine and pleasant.

The fire was quickly lighted, and coffee prepared, though it was only after repeated assurances that they had dined, and needed nothing substantial, that a more formal meal was dispensed with.

Anne Bäbeli had grown from a lively child into a beautiful girl ; she soon made friends with Freneli, and took her away to show her her treasures. Ulric also presently withdrew, out of respect, so the older people were left alone.

Then the cousin began, with a sigh, to explain why she had come. John had so often served them, that she turned to him now for counsel and help. She related all that had passed at Steinbrucke since the unhappy visit to Gurnigel, and all her fears for the future, and ended by saying that she only knew one way out of their difficulties, which was, to let the farm, and take Ulric for tenant. He was honest and good ; he would regard their interests ; and, also, he might make his own fortune : they would not drive a hard bargain with him. She had not mentioned it to a single creature ; she had wished to discuss it with him first ; and if he approved of the plan, she would get him to talk to Ulric, and set the matter going. If she could accomplish it, she should wish for nothing more in the world, though many things would remain that were not to her mind.

John said there was a great deal that was good in the idea, and he should rejoice in it for Ulric's sake ; but there were two objections ;—one, that Ulric had too little money for so large an undertaking ; his savings were considerable,

but still quite insufficient. He would scarcely have enough to buy stock, and he would be obliged to sell at the wrong time, which was the ruin of most tenant-farmers: then, secondly, he could not keep house with servants only, he must have a wife, and where was one to be found who could manage such extensive house-keeping?

I know of one for him, said the cousin—just the very girl we have brought with us. There could not be a better, and she and Ulric are accustomed to each other; we might die to-day, and they could carry on everything, so that no one would remark that we were missing. She is strong and healthy, and very thoughtful for one so young. She is not rich, certainly, but she has nice little savings, a good stock of clothes, and we should not let her go empty-handed. You know about her mother. If Ulric took Freneli, I think he would need little for the stocking of the farm in implements, cattle, etc. The things are there, they might have them at a valuation, and we could take up the farm again if we wished. They might begin almost as if he was the son of the house.

That is all very nice and very good, said John, but you must not take it amiss if I ask whether you think that everybody will give their consent. Many persons would have to agree about it. What will your people say? Joggeli is sometimes odd, and your children will wish to let the farm at the highest rent. Ulric would make a great venture; a bad year, or disease among the cattle, might ruin him. The worth of five hundred gulden, more or less, is not perceptible on such an estate, but two or three thousand may be lost in a year. And would the girl take Ulric? She seems lively and merry, and he has some thirty years on his shoulders.

The cousin said these points did not trouble her much. Joggeli would, in the end, be glad to give up; and Ulric would certainly be acceptable to him as tenant-farmer. It would be quite right for their son; he had urged them to let the farm before his brother-in-law got hold of everything. He also thought a great deal of Ulric, and



## 228      Ulric, the Farm Servant

would have liked to engage him for himself. The son-in-law did not matter; he had had far too much to say in their affairs, and they should be glad to end his interference. Freneli, she knew, had no one else in her mind. She thought she was not indifferent to Ulric, and that was the reason why she had been so angry when people had taken them for a wedding-party. She remarked that though she was old, she had not forgotten how girls who have self-respect behave in such circumstances. She really could not understand the forward wenches of the present day!

Excuse me, cousin, said John, but if we wish an affair to succeed, we must consider it thoroughly, and be quite open about it. I will say frankly that this proposal pleases me for your sake, and for Ulric's, and also for my own, as Ulric is much in my mind, and I regard him almost as a son. He talked to me about Elisi, and I dissuaded him. I saw that my advice did not suit him, and I wonder if he will say anything to me about it now. Shall I talk to him on this present subject, or will you discuss it first with Joggeli?

I would rather make it straight with Ulric and Freneli first, and that is why I have brought them here, said she. If I had begun with Joggeli, and then they had not consented, he would have reproached me with my bad management all my life long, for in that way he is very odd, and never forgets. But he is not one of the worst. Sound Ulric, Cousin John, and find out how he is disposed. I should feel quite light-hearted if I could see my way. Does not the maid please you? she asked.

John and his wife admired Freneli greatly, and said how pretty and attractive she was. The farmer promised his ready help.

He was not alone with Ulric that evening, so the desired interview could not take place; but the next morning, as soon as they had breakfasted, John invited Ulric to go for a walk with him on his land. The cousin wished to leave in good time, so as not to be late in

reaching home ; and while the wife was urging her to stay until the next day, the two men set off.

It was a beautiful morning. The bells sounded from one church tower after another, announcing that this was the Lord's Day, and inviting men to keep Sabbath with Him, to receive His peace and to know His love. The two men walked on with devout minds ; and for some time few words were exchanged between them. They came to a belt of wood, from which they could see the valley, bathed in the wonderful mist of autumn, and the many church towers, which each sent forth its summons, calling men together to receive seed into prepared hearts, so that it might bring forth fruit, some sixty, some a hundredfold. They sat there yet a while in silence, and drew in, through eye and ear, the Lord's magnificent teaching, which is given to all, day by day, in every land, without spoken words : they read in the book of nature, and allowed its music to penetrate to the sanctuary of their souls.

At last John asked, Are you not going to stay at the Steinbrücke, then ?

No, said Ulric. Not that I am angry about Elisi ; I saw afterwards that I should not have had an hour's happiness with such a wicked simpleton. I cannot understand what I was thinking about. But still I should not like to remain ; the son-in-law is constantly there, plunders the old people, and tries to rule every one else. I do not like to see it, and I will not be ordered about by him. •

But what will you do, then ? asked John.

That is just what I should like to consult you about, said Ulric. I could get plenty of places. I might go to the son ; he would give me as high wages as I liked. I have no feeling against being a servant, but I think if I am ever to begin anything else, it is about time now. I am over thirty years of age.

Oh yes, said John. Have you any thoughts of marrying ?

Not exactly, said Ulric ; but if I am to marry at all, it

## 230      Ulric, the Farm Servant

should be soon ; and one should set up in some way when opportunity serves. But I do not know how to set up. I have too little money. What are a thousand gulden ? I have often thought of what you said to me ; people cannot make the rent out of little farms ; a tenant-farmer without capital cannot undertake a great estate, and with a small one he goes to the ground.

Oh, said John, a thousand gulden are indeed something ; and there are farms here and there where the cattle and implements can be taken at a valuation, which would leave you the thousand gulden in hand, and if you wanted more, you would readily find people who had it.

Yes, but they would not lend it to me. If you want money, you must give good security.

Remember, Ulric, said John, as I have often told you, a good character is good security. Fifteen years ago I would not have lent you fifteen batzen, but now, if you wanted one or two thousand gulden, you should have it on a simple acknowledgment ; or I would go security for you. Tell me what you want. What are men in the world for, if not to help one another ?

That is a kind offer, said Ulric. I should not have ventured to think of such a thing. If I had a chance now, I would accept it.

I would not, if I were you, said John ; I would look out for a wife first, and then I would set up in some way. Many a man has gone to the ground because the wife did not suit herself to his business. To manage a house well, there should be unity of will. You would gain much if you had a wife, and then you could choose a home together which suited you both. But perhaps you have some one in view ?

No, said Ulric ; I know of one, indeed, but she would not have me.

Why not ? asked John. Is it a rich farmer's daughter again ?

No, said Ulric ; it is the girl who has come with the mistress. She is not rich, but whoever gets her will be a fortunate man. He would be happier with her if she

had not a batz, than with the rich Elisi. Everything prospers with her, whatever she takes in hand goes well, and there is nothing that she does not understand. I believe she is never weary ; she is first in the morning and last in the evening, and never idle during the day. She is never late with the meals ; she does not worry the maids ; she is never sullen nor out of temper ; *the more there is to be done, the better-humoured she is*, while most women become dreadfully cross when they are busy ; she is a thrifty manager, yet remarkably good to the poor, and if any one is ill, she waits on them with the utmost kindness : there is no one like her, far or near.<sup>1</sup>

But why should you not get her ? asked John ; does she dislike you ?

No, said Ulric. She is kind to me, and she does everything that can give me pleasure. When I am anxious to get something done, she helps ; and she has never put an obstacle in my way, as some women do, out of the mere love of contradiction. But she is rather proud ; she cannot forget that she belongs to a superior family, however ungraciously they may regard her. She makes men keep their distance, and she has been known to box their ears.

But that does not prove that she would not take you ; it is quite right that she should keep up her maidenly dignity.

But there is another thing, said Ulric. I dare not think of Freneli. Would she not say to me, Now that you cannot get the rich one, I am good enough for you, forsooth ! If you could prefer the green and yellow Elisi, I will have nothing to say to you. I do not like any one who could engage himself to such a creature ? That is what she would answer me. And yet, during all the time of that wretched affair with Elisi, my mind was filled with Freneli. I see now that I have loved her, and her only. If I had her, I would venture to undertake a farm, and make more of it than any one else. But

<sup>1</sup> Well said, Ulric, at last !

## 232      Ulric, the Farm Servant

it is too late. She would not take me ; she is too proud.

Oh, said John, you must not lose courage so long as a girl is free. Women are strange beings ; they sometimes do the very opposite to what is expected of them. If things are as you say, I should risk it. The girl pleases me.

No, master, I would not ask her for a hundred thalers. I know well that it will almost break my heart to leave her and see her no more each day. But if I were to ask and she were to reject me, I think I should hang myself on the first tree. I could not bear to see another take her to church ; I believe I could shoot him. But she will not marry ; she will remain single.

Then John began to laugh heartily, and to ask how he knew that such an incomparable girl, aged twenty-three, would always remain single.

Oh, said Ulric, she does not wish to marry ; and I do not know one who would be worthy of her.

The farmer then said they must manage to get home before the service was over ; he did not care to meet the people coming out of church. Ulric followed, saying little, but always bringing the conversation round to Freneli. Then he begged John not to let a word of what he had said pass his lips.

You foolish fellow, said the farmer, to whom should I repeat it ?

The cousin had been fidgety for a long time ; and as soon as Ulric and his old master came, she told Ulric to go to the room in which she had slept, to ask Freneli to prepare for their departure.

Ulric found the girl standing before a table, on which she was folding one of the cousin's aprons. He went gently behind her, put his arm round her, but quite respectfully, and said, The mistress wishes to go.

Freneli turned round quickly, silent, and astonished at this unusual familiarity.

He said, Are you still vexed with me ?

I have never been vexed with you, said Freneli.

Give me a kiss, then ; you have never given me one ; and he bent down towards her.

In a moment Freneli broke away from him so violently, that he was pushed into the middle of the room ; yet he *thought* he had got a kiss first !<sup>1</sup> But she was very angry. She said he was too old for such tricks, and she supposed the mistress had not sent him up to delay her with such foolery. He should think what Stini, his old sweetheart, would say to it. She would not like to be led such a dance as Ersi was. Then she laughed, so that Ulric was quite crestfallen, and made his way to the door as quickly as possible.

They did not set out as early as the mistress intended ; it was absolutely necessary to partake of a repast to which John's wife had devoted her whole cooking powers and the best of her household stores. Although the cousin said repeatedly, Bless me ! who could eat of everything ? there was no end to the pressing, and she was not allowed to leave the table until she declared that she could not possibly swallow another morsel.

While the horse was being put in, she pressed new coins into the children's hands ; they refused at first, and the parents protested, but she said they were to say no more about it, and she hoped they would come to Steinbrucke, so that she might show them how grateful she was for their hospitality. They replied that it would be very pleasant, but she need not have been in such a hurry ; she might as well have stayed another day. She got into the little chaise at last, and at first starting had a great deal to say to Freneli about the observations she had made. She said if she had been younger, and able to work out her ideas, she should have derived great benefit from her visit. Ulric was silent ; he appeared to be exclusively occupied with keeping the black horse at a brisk trot.

At last the mistress begged him to spare the poor beast, and gave him orders to stop about half-way, not only on account of the horse, she said, but also on her

<sup>1</sup> This is very lovely. It was so light that he was not sure.

## 234      Ulric, the Farm Servant

own ; ham, and so many other good things, always made her thirsty.

Freneli said she felt just the same, and to-day they might go to an inn without being taken for a wedding-party, (they would rather think, from Ulric's face, that they were returning from a funeral).

Ulric said he had no occasion to look cheerful as far as *she* was concerned. On Saturday it was not right for him to laugh ; on Sunday it was not right for him to look serious ; it was hard to hit the precise point.

You are hasty, Ulric, said Freneli ; I did not know one might not venture to make a remark !

Quarrel well ! said the mistress ; lovers must have quarrels, and you are just like a couple, the day *after* the wedding !

That is why I will not marry, said Freneli. As long as I am single I have a right to look as I please.

I also, said Ulric ; and if my face does not suit you, you need not look at it. Only have a little patience, and I shall be out of your way altogether.

Hush ! hush ! said the mistress ; do not finish so badly and get home angry. If we turn joke into earnest, we can never get through the world. And really, if people blaze up in that manner, they *had* better remain single. I also was hasty tempered when I was a girl ; I could bear nothing ; but if I had continued so with my Joggeli, one or both of us would soon have been in our graves. I soon saw that one of us must give in, and it would have to be me. Not that Joggeli did not yield a little also ; he improved in many ways.

I do not believe there are any two in the world who would not have to alter more or less to suit each other, said Freneli, so it is better to stay single ; one is quite free, and no one can take offence.

Oh, Freneli, do you not think of what God requires of you ? It is His will that we should be always changing, and becoming better from day to day. Is it beneath you to consider whether you put on a face which is pleasing in His sight ?

Cousin, said Freneli, how you come down upon me ! We were talking of a husband, and you begin about God. I see little connection between the two ! How God can come into your mind when we were speaking of men I cannot understand.<sup>1</sup> They rather remind one of the devil, for *he* was a man, and tempted the woman, and so brought unhappiness upon us all. I have never heard of a woman-devil, which is a sure sign that the devil has never found his like in women, only in men. The Scripture says there are whole legions of devils amongst men.

Do not talk in that sinful way, said the cousin ; you do not know what is in store for you. I believe you do not speak from your heart, but just like all girls who have no lover, or not the right one.

Just as Freneli was going to reply, Ulric, who had turned his back, and behaved as if he did not hear, drove up to the appointed inn. The hostess received them, and ushered them into a private room at the request of the cousin, who desired Ulric to join them presently. Then she (the cousin) ordered refreshments, remarking that "the drive had made her so hungry, she could not have believed it."<sup>2</sup>

Ulric did not come, though the hostess was sent after him. Freneli did not want to go, and thought, or *said* she thought, "if he were hungry or thirsty, he would come soon enough."

"I shall have to fetch him myself," said the cousin, "if you will not."

Then Freneli went, with a bad grace, to Ulric, who was sulking outside. She said "he might stay where he was, as far as *she* was concerned, but the mistress's orders were that he should come, and it would be no pleasure to her to have to come and tell him again." Ulric went at last, and the mistress reproached him for

<sup>1</sup> Monkey that she is !

<sup>2</sup> I use inverted commas now, to make this lovely scene quite clear. It is worth having read all the book through, in the dullest of it, only for these four pages.



## 236      Ulric, the Farm Servant

standing on ceremony. She urged him to eat, pressed him to drink, and talked over everything with him ; said how pleased she had been at Cousin John's, and how she saw now where Ulric had got his excellent training. She remarked on her pleasure in the evident attachment of the children to him and the regard of the parents for him. "They think as much of you as if you belonged to them. You will go to them when you leave us?"

"No," said Ulric.

"It is not generally the custom to ask, but will you tell me where you *are* going?" asked the mistress.

Ulric said "he did not know yet ; he had not been in a hurry to take a place, though he had had many chances."

"Well, stay with us ; that will suit best on both sides ; we are accustomed to each other."

"She must not take it amiss," he said, "but he had not thought of remaining any longer in service."

"Have you got anything else to do?" asked she, and when he answered in the negative, she added, "If you do not wish to be servant any longer, what if we were to take you as tenant of our farm?"

These words came like a thunderclap to Ulric. He let his fork, with a piece of mutton on it, fall on his plate, while he kept his mouth open, and turned great round eyes, like plough-wheels, towards the mistress, gazing at her as if she had dropped from the moon.

Freneli, who had been standing at the window, and feeling impatient with Ulric for being so long eating, turned quickly round, and listened intently.

"Yes, look at me," said the mistress to Ulric ; "my question is a serious one. If you will not stay as servant, would you like to stay as tenant?"

"Mistress," said Ulric at last, "how could I be your tenant? It is out of my power ; that is for some one better furnished with money than I am. You are joking with me !"

"No, Ulric, I am in earnest ; it is not out of your power ; it could be arranged so that the beginning would

cost you nothing. Cattle, implements, and tools are all there."

"But who would be my security? A single bad year on such a farm would ruin me. The undertaking is quite beyond me."

"Oh, Ulric, we are not such unreasonable people. We should not let a tenant who is acceptable to us go to ruin for a single bad year. Only say that you are willing, and it shall be done."

"Yes, mistress, but even so who would do the house-keeping for me? That is an important question."

"Oh, take a wife," said the mistress.

"That is soon said," answered Ulric; "but where could I find one who would be equal to such an undertaking, and who would have me?"

"Don't you know one?" asked the mistress.

Then Ulric's words stuck in his throat, and in his embarrassment he scratched about his plate with his fork. Freneli said quickly she thought it was time they were off, the horse had done his oats long since, and Ulric must surely have had enough; they might joke with each other on some other occasion. The mistress paid no attention to her, but said again, after awhile, "Don't you know one? I know of one for you." Ulric again turned great eyes towards the mistress. She leaned her broad back comfortably in her chair, and laid one hand on the table, saying in undisturbed and mischievous good-humour, "I will give you one guess. You know her well." Ulric looked round at the walls, but could not find the right words; he felt as if he had a whole sackful of mashed potatoes sticking in his throat. Freneli tripped impatiently behind the mistress, and said they should be setting off; it would soon be dark. The mistress did not listen to her, but continued, "Does she not come into your mind? You know her well; she is an industrious girl, only rather tiresome sometimes; if you did not quarrel, you would suit each other exactly." Then she laughed heartily, and looked from one to the other. Before Ulric could get a word out of

## 238      Ulric, the Farm Servant

answer, Freneli interposed and said sternly, "Go and put the horse in. Cousin, a joke may be carried too far. I wish I had never come. I do not know why I cannot be let alone. People made me angry yesterday, and you are far worse to-day. It is not right of you, cousin."

Ulric stood up, and was going, but the mistress said, "Sit down and listen. I am quite in earnest. I have said to Joggeli many a time, No two people ever suited each other better than those two; they are made for each other."

"But, cousin," said Freneli, "for goodness' sake leave off, or shall I run away. I do not let myself be offered like a cow at a market. Only wait till Christmas, and I shall be out of your sight; or I can go sooner. Why do you give yourself so much useless trouble in bringing two people together who do not care for each other? Ulric wants me as little as I want him, and the sooner we are parted, the better pleased I shall be."

At last Ulric found words. "Freneli, do not be angry with me," he said. "I have had nothing to do with this. But one thing I must say to you, even if you hate me. I have loved you long, and *known* that if you would be my wife, I should be happy indeed."

"Oh, certainly," said Freneli, "as soon as you hear about the farm, you think I should do to keep house for you. You are amusing. If you could only become tenant of the farm, you would marry the first girl you met on the road. But it is otherwise with me. I am not in want of a husband, least of all of one who thinks a wife a secondary consideration, to be thrown in with the farm. If you will not drive, I will run home." And with these words she tried to quit the room.

But Ulric held her fast, and said, "No, indeed, Freneli. You do me injustice. If I had you, I would go with you into waste lands, where I should have nothing to do but clearing and stubbing. It is true that when Elisi encouraged me, and I had the farm in my head, I would have taken her for her money. But I should have sinned

grievously, for I loved you all the time. I used to shrink at her approach, while my heart bounded whenever I met you. Only ask Farmer Boden ! I said to him this morning that no woman under the sun could be compared to you."

"Let me go," said Freneli, who, in spite of this fine speech, had pulled and scratched like a cat in a string.

"I will let you go," said Ulric, who had borne the scratching and pinching manfully, "but you must not suspect me of wanting you just for the farm. You must believe that I loved you long before."

"I promise nothing," said Freneli, tearing herself away with an impetus which sent her against the table.

"I have never in all my life seen such a girl," said the cousin. "Be reasonable now. Sit down beside me. *Will* you come or not ? I will never speak a kind word to you again if you do not sit down for a minute and keep yourself still. Ulric, order another bottle."

Then she told them what it would be to her if they both went away ; she wept at the thought of the evil days which awaited her. She shed bitter tears about her children, but said she might yet be happy if this plan, which she had contemplated during many sleepless nights, could be accomplished. She had never seen two persons who worked together so well and so helpfully. If they were to set up on the farm, they would be sure to succeed. She would do what she could to help them. She and Joggeli would not be like some of the gentry, who are never pleased unless their tenants go to the ground every two years, and who, when they cannot sleep at night, resolve to raise the rent, because it is paid at the right time, and they are afraid it is too low. They would act towards them as if they were their own children, and Freneli should have a portion which a farmer's daughter would not be ashamed of. If Freneli would not be reasonable, she did not know what to do ; she would rather not go home any more. She thought she had deserved something from her, she had acted, as she believed, for her good, and Freneli knew that such wild

## 240      Ulric, the Farm Servant

ways vexed her extremely ; but she had for a long time been changed towards her : she was not as she used to be. And the good woman burst into tears.

But, cousin, said Freneli, how can you talk like that ?<sup>1</sup> You have been a mother to me, and as such I have always regarded you, and I would not hesitate to go through fire and water for your sake. But I cannot let myself be offered in this way to one who only wants me, with the cows, for his farm.

How can you persist so ? said the cousin. Have you not heard him say that he has long loved you ?

Oh yes, said Freneli. They all say that. If they had to choke for that falsehood, very few would live to be married. If you had not spoken of the farm, you would have seen how much he loved me. And it was not right of you to say nothing to me beforehand, and then throw me to him as you would throw a fir cone to a pig. If you had allowed me a word with you first, I could have told you what is the main thing with Ulric. He says, Gold, I love you ; and then is one to understand, Girl, I love you ?

You are a strange creature, said the cousin, and more arrogant than if you were a great gentleman's daughter.

Just because I am only a poor girl, I must keep up my own dignity. I have more need to do it than a proud gentleman's daughter.

But, Freneli, said Ulric, is it fair to make me suffer for it ? You know well in your heart that I love you, and that I knew as little as you did what the mistress had in her mind ; so it is not right to cast your anger on me.

Oh, said Freneli, now I begin to see that it was all arranged, or you would not defend yourself before you were accused. I will hear nothing more of the matter. I will not be made to jump like a fish into a net.

With these words Freneli tried to get away again, but the cousin held her fast, and said she was the most unreasonable and mistrustful girl under the sun. What

<sup>1</sup> I leave off the commas now. All is clear as soon as Freneli speaks.

had been arranged behind her back? It was true she had gone to Cousin John to consult him about this matter, and that was why she had taken them both with her. But no one had known what was in her mind, not even Joggeli, still less Ulric. She had commissioned John to sound Ulric, and he had praised Freneli up to the skies, but said he dared not speak; he was afraid she would bring up to him his affair with Elisi. Then she thought, if Ulric would not venture, she would speak for him. Nothing would persuade her that he was not acceptable to the girl; she knew how to use her own eyes. Ulric had nothing to do with this either.

Then why did he come to-day into the room where I was packing up, and want to give me a kiss? He never did so before.

Oh, said Ulric, I will tell you right out. You were in my thoughts more than ever after my talk with the master, and I felt as if I would give all I had to know if you loved me. I knew nothing about the farm. When I found myself alone with you, it overcame me, I did not know how. I felt as if I must put my arm round you and ask you for a kiss. At first I believed your eyes did not reproach me, but afterwards I thought you would not have repulsed me so violently if you had loved me. That made me troubled in heart, and I wished that Christmas had come, and I could go, and never be heard of more. And so I feel now, Freneli. If you will not have me, I will have nothing to say to the farm. I will go far away, and no one shall know where I am.

He had stood up and approached Freneli. He was deeply moved, and he looked at her with tears in his honest eyes. Large drops rolled down the cheeks of the cousin.

Then Freneli turned to him with moistened eyes, and a milder defiance played about her mouth; repressed affection shone in her eyes; but her lip curled, and she said, But, Ulric, what will Stini say? Will she not sing—

His heart is like a pigeon-cot;  
One flies in, and another out?

## 242      Ulric, the Farm Servant

How can you torment him in this way, when you see that he is in earnest? said the cousin. Let your own heart have its way. She will not send you any more into the middle of the room, Ulric, believe me.

But she was almost in the wrong. Freneli nearly sent Ulric flying again; and then burst into loud, convulsive weeping, which puzzled them greatly.

Ulric said if she would rather not have him, he would go, and not plague her.

The cousin was angry at first; then she became anxious, and said she would not urge her; and she really must not cry so, or the inn people would know all about it.

At last Freneli was able to speak. She said if they would leave her quiet, she would try to recover herself. She had been all her life a poor orphan, disowned from her infancy. She had never been taken on her father's knee; her mother had never kissed her; she had never been able to hide her head in loving arms; she had many a time thought she would gladly die if she might sit on some one's knee, and put her arms round some one's neck. But while she was a child, no one had loved her, and she had often cried in solitude and longed for some one whom she could love with all her heart and soul, on whose breast she could lay her head in happy confidence; but she had never found a friend to satisfy her longings. Then when she was older, and they talked to her of marriage, she made up her mind that she would never marry any one in whom she had not full confidence, whose true heart would not be all her own in sorrow and in joy, in life and death. But she had not found one of whom she could believe this. She loved Ulric, had long loved him more than she could say, but this faith in him she had not been able to find. And if she was deceived this time, if he did not love her truly, then her last hopes would be gone, and there would be no happiness for her in life!

You are a dear, foolish child, said the cousin, wiping her wet cheeks; if I had known it was only *that* you

## The Knots begin to Loosen 243

wanted, I should certainly not have grudged you a kiss more or less. But why did you not speak? People in our way of living cannot really think of everything; we have so many to provide for each day, we do not stop to consider who wants a caress.

Ulric said he had quite deserved Freneli's suspicions, but if she could look into his heart, she would see how much he loved her, and how sincerely he had spoken. He would not excuse himself, he had several times thought of marrying, but he had never loved another. He would not urge her; he must leave it now in God's name, and submit himself to His will.

You hear now, said the cousin, how dear you are to him. Take your glass and drink a health with Ulric, and promise that you will be tenant-farmer's wife at Steinbrücke. •

Freneli stood up, took her glass, and drank the health, but promised nothing. She begged them to say no more to her that day. On the morrow she would give her answer.

You are a strange creature, said the cousin. Now, Ulric, put the horse in; they will wonder what has become of us.

### CHAPTER XXIII

#### THE KNOTS BEGIN TO LOOSEN

“The redemption . . . is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman.”

THE stars shone in the dark blue sky, a thin mist rested on the damp meadows, while single streaks of white vapour detached themselves and floated here and there above the valleys; soft winds blew on the moist leaves; here and there a cow, forgotten in the pastures, called to her forgetful master, and a boisterous lad sent his shouts far and near. The excitement of the day



## 244      Ulric, the Farm Servant

rocked the cousin into deep sleep, and; Ulric, straining every nerve, kept back the spirited horse at a moderate pace. Freneli was alone. She reflected on her solitary condition; she felt herself as isolated as one of the stars floating above her in the boundless blue sea of limitless space. If she were to leave her cousins or lose them, she had no home in the world to turn to in case of illness, no creature in whom she could confide, no human being to smile or weep with her, to mourn for her when she died, or to follow her to her last narrow resting-place. There might be a long, solitary life before her; she might go on from year to year with lessening strength and courage, become old, infirm, despised, and find no shelter, except from the charity of others.

New sorrow seized her heart, and complaints and questionings arose in her mind. Why, she asked, does the good Father, whose name is love, leave such poor children alone in the world, to be disowned in childhood, misled in youth, despised in age? Then she began to feel that such thoughts of God were sinful and ungrateful. He *had* cared for her, and shielded her innocence, and He was opening a way for her to a rich provision. Then as the tops of mountains and the tips of trees emerge from mist, so she perceived the many signs of love which had been about her path: she had enjoyed happier days than many, many poor children; she had been with good people, who, if they had not taken her to their heart like father and mother, had yet loved her, and brought her up so that she might face the world with self-respect. No, she dared not complain of this good Father above; she felt that His hand had guided her. Was not His hand directing her now? Had He not taken pity on the poor solitary maid, and decreed that the longings of her heart should be stilled? He had helped her to be good and pure, and now He gave her a true heart in which she could confide, one who was all her own to love, who would weep at her death, and go with her on the sorrowful way to the grave. Such, indeed, was Ulric, the faithful, capable man whom

## The Knots begin to Loosen 245

she had so long loved in her secret heart. He had thought, indeed, that money could give happiness, but who could bring against him any other reproach? And how honestly and humbly he had regretted his error. Had not a kind Providence brought them to the same place, kept Ulric there, sent Elisi away, and inclined the cousin to take a tenant for the farm? Ought she to despise what was offered to her? Was it anything hard or repelling that she had to consider?

New pictures began to form themselves in her mind, and to fill in the empty future. Ulric was her husband; she was established in life; she was the central point of a large, well-ordered, prosperous household. This picture came before her eyes in a hundred forms, and in colours of ever-increasing brightness and beauty. She did not know that she was in the little chaise; her heart was light, as if she already breathed in a world where sorrow and sin were no more. Then the carriage went over a stone. Freneli did not feel it, but the cousin awoke, and recovering herself with much yawning and difficulty, asked, Oh where are we? But I have not been asleep!

Ulric replied, If you will look there, you will see our lights through the trees.

Gracious! Then I *have* been asleep. I could not have believed it. I hope Joggeli will not scold because we are so late.

It will not make any difference, said Ulric; the horse can rest to-morrow; we shall not need to use him.

Oh, then, said the mistress, it does not matter. But it is a great shame to take a horse home late and out early. Only think if it was one's self, to be made to go and go, and have no time for eating and sleeping!

This time the dwellers at Steinbrucke appeared at the door with lights and lanterns as soon as they heard the wheels, some going to the horse, some to the carriage. Even Joggeli hobbled out, and said, I thought you were not coming to-night; I was afraid that something had happened.

## 246      Ulric, the Farm Servant

There was much talking and questioning, as is usually the case when the house-mother returns home late ; but before long all was still at Steinbrucke, and nothing was to be heard but the munching of the black horse in his stable. Sweet sleep had fallen upon its inmates, bringing forgetfulness of sorrow and the presence of fair images to the unconscious mind. But no ! upon one bed sleep did not descend. The maiden who rested in it under a soft feather coverlet had a heart too deeply moved to take the seal of sleep. Lovely visions floated before her mind, some passing quickly, others lingering with the happy maid, who did not toss hither and thither seeking sleep, but eluded it hour after hour. When fresh morning breezes blew through the valley, a sweet but anxious desire began to arise in Freneli's heart—the desire to tell Ulric that she would be his for evermore. The more urgent this desire became, the more it had to struggle with anxiety lest the desired happiness should be only a dream, lest Ulric should have disappeared in the morning, or should have changed his mind through vexation with her behaviour. How much her hesitation now grieved her ; how incomprehensible it seemed ; how she longed to compensate for it, and to know whether Ulric's intentions were the same. She could not stay in bed any longer ; she got up gently, opened a little window, breathed the morning air, dressed herself, and began her morning work quietly, so that no one should hear her. She opened the door gently ; all was still outside ; no servant was yet stirring. Then she went softly to the fountain to wash herself there, according to the usual custom. But a figure already stood beside it, with the same intention, eagerly bent over the trough. With a bounding heart, Freneli recognised her Ulric. Night and mist disappeared, and the glow of morning passed over her. Her playfulness overcame her strong maidenly impulse to reserve ; she approached Ulric with noiseless steps, and quickly put both her hands over his eyes. The strong man startled violently ; a half-cry escaped him ; then, seizing the hands, he recognised

whose they were with inexpressible delight. Is it thou? he asked. Freneli's hands fell lower and embraced her lover, and without a word, she laid her head on his breast. As the water flowed clear and bright from the fountain, so the consciousness of his happiness flowed into Ulric's heart. He drew the dear maiden to himself, was not repulsed this time, but was allowed to whisper his love and joy. Wilt thou be mine? was, however, audible with the rippling of the water; Art *thou* mine? was murmured back again. The fountain accompanied many words besides these;—but never repeated any of them.

While young, blissful hearts were meeting at the fountain, an old couple had a less agreeable conversation. Joggeli and his wife awoke early, and considered this time a suitable one for a confidential word with each other. She asked if any servant had applied during her absence. Christmas was drawing near, and something would have to be done. Then Joggeli renewed his lamentations about Elisi's marriage, which was not his doing, and which robbed him of Ulric. Since he had been there, the farm had produced five hundred gulden more annually. If the girl must needs marry, he had far rather she had taken Ulric than that insatiable cotton merchant. He had no wish to look out for another servant. If Ulric would only stay on, he would give whatever he asked.

She did not know how that could be managed. She had talked with Ulric, and he would not hear of being servant any longer.

That is always the way, said Joggeli; women desire to rule and to please themselves, but when anything goes crooked, the men have to make it straight again. He had told her before how it would be. She might look out for a servant herself.

She replied that in that case she would have no more to do with anything. Who would suffer, if all went wrong, but she, who had to do the housekeeping? The best plan would be to let the estate. She saw no reason

## 248      Ulric, the Farm Servant

to fret herself into her grave for those who would only laugh at her pains.

That would suit him also, said Joggeli. He saw no use in planting, just that the son-in-law might come and take the produce, and keep the money it fetched. He had certainly had a sufficient portion, and he thought he might be satisfied now, and leave him in peace. If she knew of a suitable tenant, he would settle the matter that very day.

She said she knew of no one better than Ulric.

Ulric! said Joggeli. Yes, if he had sufficient capital and a suitable wife; but as it is, he could not undertake it.

The mother said there could be no better wife for him than Freneli, and she believed they had nothing against each other. Besides, Ulric was not altogether without means; and she believed Cousin John would help him if necessary; he seemed to think a great deal of him.

Ho! ho! said Joggeli. So it is all arranged?

Arranged? asked she.

Yes, said Joggeli. Do you think I cannot see through it? You did not go deliberately to Erdopselkof, and take Freneli and Ulric with you, for nothing. You need not think me such an idiot as not to perceive this plotting behind my back. You ought not to treat me as if I were imbecile, and carry on your plans with strangers. But you shall see who is master here.

The good woman tried explanation and conciliation, but she received no other answer, so that she said at last, Then be master, as far as I am concerned; work the farm yourself, and do the housekeeping. I will have nothing more to say to it.

She turned to the other side, went to sleep again, and got up later than usual in the morning, silent and vexed. Freneli, on the contrary, was as gay as a lark. She tripped merrily about the house, as if her feet went to music. The mistress looked at her with utter astonishment, and said when they were alone, Have you changed your mind since last night? Will you have him now?

## The Knots begin to Loosen 249

Oh, cousin, said Freneli, if you will compel me, what can I do? If you will have it so, have it; but it will not be my doing, come what will!<sup>1</sup>

You are a graceless girl to mock my husband to me, said the cousin, and your laughing will soon come to an end when you hear that he will not have a tenant. He is vexed because it was planned behind his back, and says he will show that he is master.

But Freneli's laughter did not come to an end; she said the cousin would have to be compelled, as she had been. It would be the best plan to say nothing more to him, but to go on as if they were leaving. He was already uneasy as to what he could do at Christmas, and he could not decide on another servant. If he said nothing in the course of a week, she would send for the joiner, and order a large box, such as maid-servants have when they are going elsewhere. If this had no effect, he must be told that it had been ascertained that Ulric was going to John; then he would take up the matter himself and say, Have your own way about it, if you are determined, but it will not be *my* fault, come what may.

You are a witch, said the cousin; I believe you would be able to befool a whole consistory. That would never have come into my mind, and I have been married to Joggeli nearly forty years!

Freneli instructed Ulric to behave as if he had no anxiety, and it turned out just as she had foreseen; there was even no occasion to send for the joiner. Long before a week had elapsed, Joggeli began to grumble that his wife did everything behind his back, placed confidence in every one else, and none in him; he would like to know at last what she had made out with Ulric; it was time for him also to be informed. She said she had done nothing, and meant to do nothing; it was his affair, and she did not meddle with it; he had told her that he was master. Joggeli complained still more

<sup>1</sup> Freneli playing a little bit of Joggeli, mimicking his voice.

## 250      Ulric, the Farm Servant

that his wife did not trouble herself about what was her concern as well as his ; he did not know why all must fall upon him. He wanted her to go and talk to Ulric, and say if he would marry some one else, and not Freneli, he had no objection to him as tenant ; but she had for a long time looked so brazen and saucy, he had often longed to give her a slap in the face. But his wife, instructed by Freneli, maintained that it was his business, and would not go. Then he said he would write to the son-in-law, who would readily send him either a servant or a tenant. Then the wife's heart sank, and she took up the commission. When she went to Freneli, the girl said, Oh, you good mother, have you let yourself be compelled ? But, cousin, cousin, how could you believe that Joggeli was in earnest ? If you had once more said, No, decidedly, he would have said, Well, then, if you will do nothing to please me, I will talk to Ulric ; but I do not want that wench Freni. But send Ulric to him ; the master must and shall speak with him about it formally and seriously. And so it happened.

From that time forward<sup>1</sup> all went well for Ulric, better than he expected, and, as he himself felt, better than he deserved. He thought of what his old master had said : A good name is real capital, and worth more than money and lands. The rent was reasonable ; the chief consideration was, what was to be given into the bargain. The son helped himself to anything that took his fancy ; he said he ought to have something answering to the corn and brandy which the son-in-law had taken. The tenants were to have possession, not only of the stock and implements, but also of the house furniture and servants' beds, so that if the owners chose to take up the farm again, they could do so without ruinous expense. There were certain conditions attached to the low rent. Ulric must feed a cow and two pigs for Joggeli, supply

<sup>1</sup> I omit some useless and painful recital of the vain endeavours of the cotton merchant and innkeeper to break through the plan. Happily they each render the other powerless.

## The Knots begin to Loosen 251

him with potatoes, sow one measure of flax seed and two of hemp for him, and let him have a horse whenever he wanted one. When people wish to make difficulties, each clause may be a stone of stumbling; but when they are agreed in main points, the details follow easily.

Ulric and Freneli would have very little to buy, so they could reserve most of their money. Freneli's promised outfit was not forgotten, and she received a bed and a linen-press such as are seldom seen. The son, without waiting for them to choose a piece of furniture, sent a magnificent cradle, which Freneli for a long time would not allow to be brought into the house: she persisted that there must be some mistake.

Ulric had now a great deal on his mind. He was constantly occupied with thoughts and plans for field and house and stable. Sometimes he was uneasy about the corn, sometimes about the rape-seed, sometimes about the grass; and even in midwinter, when the north wind blew, he complained that there would be no hay that season. We will not enter into details of his reckoning, as he estimated his expenditure and his gains; it will be evident that a beginner, who feels that his first year of farming will either take the ground from under his feet, or establish him securely, cannot look at things so coolly as an old and experienced farmer.

Ulric looked often to Him who had hitherto led him so graciously, and he never forgot his fervent evening thanksgivings; but the stormy sea of his thoughts was disturbed by many anxieties, and his ears were too often closed to the whisperings of peace. Freneli often complained that he was no longer the Ulric of former days; he did not laugh and joke, and she might talk for an hour without getting an answer. If she had known that the time of betrothal was so dull, she told him, she would have sent him to seek some one else. Instead of chatting with *her*, he was always considering which would be most profitable, a mare or two sows, or which cows gave the most milk, the dappled red or all black. When



## 252    Ulric, the Farm Servant

Freneli thus lovingly upbraided Ulric, he would expand for a while, and laugh and talk; then his seriousness would return.

Freneli had no less anxiety, but she was able to hide it; she was one of those persons who seem so light-hearted that people do not give them credit for deeper feelings. But sometimes for hours, and even for whole nights, she reflected on what would depend upon her as housewife, wondered if she should be equal to all claims, and earnestly prayed, with tearful eyes, that God would support and guide her in her difficult duties, and make her a good wife to Ulric.

Nothing of all this was apparent in the morning; the moist shining of her eyes seemed to come from the smoke in the kitchen; she went about gaily, and trilled her songs as if as free from care as a robin; and whenever she could catch Ulric, she liked to have a joke at his expense. But behind all this playfulness, there was the earnest inward thought of making him happy, and the realisation of her own joy in their mutual love.

You are the most light-hearted creature in the world, said the cousin sometimes. When I was going to be married, I cried often for a whole day, and when Joggeli came near me, I used to run away, and no one could get me back again. I do not know how you can go on as you do. And she really shook her head about her many a time, and thought to herself she could not understand the girls of the present day.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### HOW AT LAST THE WEDDING TAKES PLACE

“ True Fors,—the finding of the youth and maid by each other, such in character as the providence of Heaven appoints for each.”

FAST and faster, in happy anxiety, the time drew near for Ulric to undertake the farm which was confided to his honesty and skill. The marriage with Freneli was to take place first, and this event had been talked about from the beginning of the new year, but put off from week to week. Sometimes Freneli had not had time enough to think about it; sometimes she had thought, and decided on delay. Then she said she would not marry until she could return home as mistress of the house; or the shoemaker had her Sunday shoes, and she could not go to the parson in wooden ones. As the mistress sat at the table one stormy Sunday afternoon, she said, Freneli, give me the calendar; it hangs up there. She turned over the leaves, holding it at a distance from her eyes, counted the weeks with her fat forefinger, counted again, and cried out at last. Do you know it only wants five weeks to the 15th of March, the day on which we are to give up the farm to you? You stupid girl, go directly and give in the notice. Freneli would not believe it, counted again, and thought it would be time enough for the wedding a day or two before the 15th. This the mistress would not hear of, and Ulric urged that if she did not go this Sunday, she should certainly do so in the course of the week; the parson of Ueflige would have to write to the native places of both, so that the banns might be published the following Sunday. But on Monday Freneli's shoes had not yet come from the shoemaker; on Tuesday she thought the moon too bright: she would be recognised by every one in the whole village. Wednesday was

## 254      Ulric, the Farm Servant

under the sign of the Crab, which frightened her, and she said that day would not do ; maidservants would not take a place on a Wednesday, and being married was still more important, because *they* could leave when they liked, and she could not. At last on Thursday they all talked seriously to Freneli, and said she could not continue this absurd behaviour. There was nothing to be ashamed of, she would have to go, and she would be glad when it was over. Happily, the shoemaker had brought the shoes ; there was a wild flurry of snow, and you could scarcely see before you. When the storm was at the wildest, the hail clattered against the panes, and lay a finger deep on the window sills ; when the wind howled, and the lamps would scarcely burn ; when the cats took refuge by the fire, and the dog craved entrance by scratching at the kitchen door—then Freneli said at last, Now, Ulric, get ready ; we will go. I don't think many people can peep at us to-night.

You are always the same wild creature, said the mistress ; I would not go with you in such weather if I were Ulric ; I should let you go alone.

He can please himself, said Freneli, but if he does not come, I will not go afterwards. If his love is as great as he professes it to be, the storm will be a pleasure to him.

Well, take the little chaise ; Hans can drive ; you will be lost in such a hurricane.

Oh, cousin, people would talk if we went in a chaise to give notice of the wedding. We should get into the calendar, and the chaise into the great Helge !

The mistress then tried to dissuade Ulric, but he said he might well bear with some fancies after his own foolish conduct ; and he would go, if Freneli wished it. There would be this advantage : they could go together, instead of waiting for each other behind a hedge or a barn.

The cousin, while lamenting the folly of the proceeding, helped the girl in her preparations, and brought Joggeli's cloak and fur gloves to shield her from the inclemency of the weather.

## The Wedding Takes Place 255

Listen, Freneli, she said, you trifle with health and happiness ; if you go on in this strange way, Ulric will end by turning you out of the house. Good gracious ! when a girl behaves in this way, what kind of an old woman will she become ? Strange ways increase with age, I can tell you.

When they were on the threshold, Freneli was driven back three times by the wind, and Ulric's hat was blown into the middle of the kitchen. The mother besought them not to go ; but Freneli made a great effort, and disappeared into the whirling snow, and the lamentations of the mother were lost in the whistling of the wind.

It was a desperate walk, and Ulric had really to help the girl : the wind was in their faces ; they often lost their way, had to stand and consider where they were, and to turn round to let the most violent gusts go by. They were quite three-quarters of an hour in accomplishing the fifteen minutes' walk to the parsonage. There they shook off the snow as well as they could, and knocked at the door, but for a long time in vain ; the sound was lost in the howling of the wind, which roared terribly in the chimneys. Then Freneli lost patience, and superseded Ulric's respectful knocking with such a hammering at the door that every one in the house started, and the parson's wife said, Good gracious ! what is that ? Her husband quieted her, and said, It must be some one who wants a child baptised, or a wedding pair who have already knocked several times, and Marie has not heard them. While Marie opened the door, he got a light, so that he might not keep the applicants waiting ; and as soon as she announced two persons, he stepped out immediately.

He found the pair inside the door, Freneli standing behind Ulric. The parson was a rather short, middle-aged man, with a venerable head and good features. His countenance expressed good sense and judgment, and also much benevolence. He raised the light and stretched forward his head, then exclaimed, Oh, Ulric,

## 256      Ulric, the Farm Servant

is it you? In such a storm, too! And Freneli will be behind you, he added, turning the light round. And the Steinbrucke farm-folk let you come! Here, Marie, take this cloak and dry it. Marie came very willingly with her lamp. Then the lady opened the door with a light in her hand also, and said, Bring them in here, this room is warmer, and Freneli and I are well acquainted.

Freneli stood there in the light of the three lamps, and did not well know which way to look. At last she put a good face on the matter, came forward, greeted the parson and his wife courtcously, and said, with the most innocent air in the world, that her cousin and the master wished them a good evening.

But why do you come in such a storm? Did you want to be lost in it? asked the parson.,

She could not well do otherwise, said Ulric, who thus began to assume the husband's part of taking the self-will of his wife on his own shoulders, a duty which a man is obliged to exercise unless he wishes to appear hen-pecked, or to expose the caprices of his wife. We could not venture to delay longer, he continued, because we wished the banns to be published next Sunday.

They were rather late for that, said the parson; he did not know whether the post would arrive in both places before the Sunday.

In the meantime Freneli behaved as if the matter did not concern her, and talked in a lively manner with the minister's wife about the flax, which seemed so fine and yet yielded so little.

When the formalities were at an end, the minister said to Ulric, You will be tenant of the Steinbrucke. I am very glad. You are not like many who scarcely claim to be men, still less Christians. You act like a man and a Christian.

Yes, said Ulric. How could I forget God? I have more need of Him than He of me; and if I did not remember Him, how could I hope for blessings at His hands?

## The Wedding Takes Place 257

That is true, Ulric, and He is blessing you richly : you have a fine farm, and you are getting a good wife. I do not refer now to work and management, though Freneli is noted for these in all the country round : but to something besides skill and industry. She seems careless and light-hearted, but I know she has deep feelings and a noble nature.

Freneli's lively interest in the flax had not caused her to lose a word of this conversation ; she had pretended not to hear it at first ; but at this point she could not help saying, Perhaps, sir, you have too much confidence in me. •

No, Freneli, said the minister. I look unperceived into many a heart at the time of religious instruction. I hear more than many people think, and I divine much. For instance, is it not *your* fault that you have come through such fearful weather ? I wish with all my heart that this may be the roughest, wildest journey you will ever take together during your married life. As to the trials which come from God, we know they all work for good ; but I may well wish that your path may never be made hard and difficult through the faults of either of you. Two souls who are one in God may bear what comes from His hand, but when the self-will, caprice, or passion of man or wife brings misfortune, and the innocent one must share the bitter cup, and think how different all would be but for the other's fault, this is miserable indeed, and the way through life becomes more stormy than your way here to-night. And when life is near its close, and people's eyes are opened to see that they have themselves raised tempests on their path, and troubled that existence which they should have made happy and peaceful, when they see that the journey has been a weary one, which they might have made smooth and glad—then, Freneli, think of the self-reproach which must darken the conscience and oppress the soul.

She blushed deeply, and her eyes filled with tears.

But, my dear,, said the minister's wife, it is very embarrassing for poor Freneli. I myself shrink from

## 258     Ulric, the Farm Servant

hearing you speak so severely, and you are not sure that it is as you think.

I may mistake, said the parson, but an earnest word is suitable for this serious occasion. You will remember all your lives the dreadful storm and the difficult walk; then the friendly warning will also recur to your minds, even if this were not Freneli's fault, so that each of you will take care not to bring sorrow or suffering on the other; and you will try to remember that we are here to sweeten life to each other, and not to make it bitter and burdensome. St. Paul says marriage is a mystery; but he also describes the key to it in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. If I have done you injustice, Freneli, do not be angry with me; I think you must know that I meant it kindly.

Then Freneli's tears began to flow. She offered her hand to the minister, and said, You are more than right; it was my fault, and I have been a very wilful girl. I will never forget what you have said to me; it will be a warning to me all my life. I had no ill intention, and I did not think it would turn out as it has done; but I had a great dislike to giving notice of the banns, and I did everything I could think of to delay coming. I will never forget your kind, true words.

Then the maid came in with the plates to spread the table. Freneli remarked it, and stood up to take leave, although the parson's wife said there was no hurry; she and Ulric must stay and have supper with them. But Freneli said they must go, or the cousin would think they were lost, thanked the parson once more right heartily, and begged him to promise to go and see them when they were settled; they could offer him and the lady coffee, if they might make so free. She should be delighted to see them arrive. Wishing them much happiness in the sacred marriage state, the parson himself lighted them out, holding the lamp high, and sending greetings also to the cousin and the master.

The storm had abated. Jagged clouds were driving through the sky; single stars glimmered in the light

spaces between them ; the earth was wrapped in a white garment of snow. They walked silently through the village, where the inhabitants sat behind their little window-panes at dim lamps. The spinning-wheels whirled merrily, and many a Hans and Joggi lounged about the stoves. Here and there a dog barked at them, otherwise they were unperceived, and their caution in going quietly through the village was quite superfluous. But their hearts were full,—much that was serious, and much that was bright, passed through their minds, while the clouds drove rapidly by, and the stars came out in ever-increasing number, until the last cloud disappeared, and each glittering gem beamed above them in clear sky, while the dim lamps of the village were left far behind. Then Freneli silently embraced her Ulric, and both raised moistened eyes to the beaming heaven. The silent stars heard holy vows and shone upon the sacred thoughts which filled the hearts of the happy bridal pair ; they went quietly on their homeward way, which God had spread for them with the unspotted snow, emblem of peace and purity.

The important day approached. The old people had already withdrawn to the detached apartments, and the mistress was having the house thoroughly cleaned, though Freneli objected, saying that so much scouring, at that cold season, was useless and unhealthy. It was of no avail ; people should not have it to say after her death that she had not cleaned her house before she went out of it ! The joiner had brought his work, tailors and sempstresses had, with much urging, got done at last, but the shoemaker enjoyed keeping them waiting ; his motto was, “They will stay till I come.” Freneli declared that he should never make another pair of shoes for her, if she went barefoot ; and she kept her word.

On the day before the marriage Freneli went about the house quietly and seriously ; perhaps she had never talked so little as on that day ; she often felt inclined to shed tears, yet she had a pleasant smile for those whom



## 260      Ulric, the Farm Servant

she met in the house. Sometimes she forgot time, and space, and all things around her, and was so entirely engrossed by her reflections, that when some question recalled her to consciousness, she seemed to have fallen suddenly from another world.

While they sat at the evening meal, they all started at the report of firing on the hill near the house. It was the servants and day-labourers, who wished thus to announce to all the country round their goodwill at the marriage of their new master and mistress. No discordant horn-blowing sounded, no rude mob, excited by envy or hostility, disturbed the peaceful evening. The mistress was not sparing with her advice, intermingled with a variety of jokes; and she took care to add warm shoes, and gloves, and everything she could think of to shelter them from the cold of the frosty morning. They were to set off very early.

Ulric wished the marriage to be celebrated at Muhliwald, his native place, where Cousin John lived. He said it would cost less there, but another reason influenced him; he wished to show off his beautiful bride and handsome chaise before those who had known him as the good-for-nothing lad of former days, and looked forward to relating many histories of the kindness of others, which had helped to make him what he was.

Unexpectedly, Joggeli went to him late in the evening, and said, praise and flattery were not much in his line, but he had shown his satisfaction by his deeds; he would not have given the farm at so low a rent to a stranger. His son-in-law had written to him only the day before, pressing him to have an auction, and promising him five or six per cent. interest on the capital thus gained. But he would abide by his agreement, and he wished him to accept a little token of his goodwill; he then gave him a packet of money towards the expenses of the next day. I know that you are a saving man, he added, and that you like to keep your money together, but to-morrow you must not grudge a little outlay. Saving is a fine thing, but a man must not look

## The Wedding Takes Place 261

at every kreutzer on his wedding-day ! It is a bad omen if the young wife comes home sad and half-starved.

Ulric declined at first, and thanked Joggeli for all the tokens of his goodwill, promising that he would show himself mindful of the favours he had received ; then took the money at last, though he said it was not required, and he had already laid something aside for the occasion. Then the mother laughed, and said she did not think it could be much. She knew his ways. He might perhaps have set apart a new thaler. He would not like to change a larger coin.

When it is hard work to earn money, one counts every batz before spending it, said Ulric ; I cannot now understand how people can squander carelessly in one day what they have earned hardly in six days. But to-morrow I do not wish to be sparing. I should like to invite my old master and mistress. I should not grudge two crowns or sixty batzen.

Joggeli, who seldom thoroughly enjoyed a laugh, now joined his wife in a hearty peal. You will not ruin yourself if you invite guests and spend no more than that, said he ; it is well that I have added something to it, or the horse would be hungered, and you would have a long face for many a day, because you had been at so much expense ; and so would Freni, from being nearly famished. Good-night.

But Ulric had not by any means a good night. They were to start at three o'clock in the morning ; the hours were few, but they seemed very long. Ulric could not sleep, many things occupied his mind ; he tossed about uncasily, and looked at his watch very frequently. The whole importance of what he was undertaking weighed heavily on his mind, and delightful pictures of Freneli in all her charms danced before his closed eyes. The hour in which ghosts walk was not long past when he left his bed to feed the horse and groom him well for the occasion. Then he went to the fountain, and as he bent over the basin, mischievous hands again encircled him, and Freneli brought him a sweet morning greeting. A

## 262      Ulric, the Farm Servant

presentiment had taken her to the fountain, and they embraced in the cold morning air, as if mild evening breezes were fanning them. All Ulric's anxieties vanished, and he quickly made the preparations for the journey. He was soon ready to go in and have some hot coffee which Freneli had made, and some white bread and cheese which the cousin had provided. The girl had not much quiet time at the table, she was continually getting up for fear of forgetting something, and the mistress's warmly-lined shoes were nearly left behind. When she stood there quite ready, handsome and well-dressed, the two maids, whose curiosity had got them out of bed, went round her with their lamps, and were so lost in admiration, that they forgot that oil makes spots and fire kindles. Freneli had to be on her guard against the consequences. The poor maids each thought that if she had equally fine clothes, she would look as beautiful as Freneli, and perhaps drive to a wedding with as handsome a bridegroom.

Long before three o'clock, they set off in the cold frosty morning air. They drove with glad hearts to meet the hour in which their life-bond was to be consecrated; a delightful confidence in each other and in God had formed itself in their souls; they did not doubt about their happiness. Ulric kissed his Freneli, and ventured to remark that her glowing cheeks were very unlike Elisi's cold ones. Freneli did not take this amiss, but rejoined that what was past was done with and she wished to forget it. But for the future "she would beg him to refrain from ascertaining whether other people's cheeks were cold or hot. The stars began to pale, the air was very cold at the approach of dawn, and Freneli expressed a wish to go into a warm room. They therefore stopped at the next inn, which was comfortless enough so early in the morning.

Eight batzen already! said Ulric as he paid the reckoning; and one batz to the ostler makes nine! It is well Joggeli gave me something.

Then he drew out the little packet: it was one of those

## The Wedding Takes Place 263

which pass in the canton of Berne as change of a large thaler, to save the trouble of counting. When he opened it, he found that it contained more than six large thalers in five-batz pieces, and some smaller change besides. He was almost frightened when he saw them unwrapped, and kept saying, Look! Freneli, look what Joggeli gave me! If I had known it was so much, I should have thanked him more.

It is only a pleasure deferred, said Freneli; the chief thing is that you have his present. I should not have expected it from him. He might have given *me* something too! He never once asked me if I had a kreutzer, and he knows it is a bad omen if a bride has not a coin in her pocket. But I think he would enjoy it, if I had not the spending of a batz all my lifetime!

There, said Ulric, take half; it belongs to you as much as to me.

No, Ulric, said Freneli; what are you thinking of? I have money enough, and if I had not, what is yours, is mine. Depend upon it, I will be a good wife to you, if you act towards me as a husband should. But if you try to take the upper hand, and consider that I must not act freely, or spend when I think proper, you will see the result. I have always had to be on the defensive, everyone has wished to oppress me, and no one has been able to do so. You know I can be very wilful. I believe you would gain as little as the rest by opposition.

But we will not try it, said Ulric. You turn everyone round your finger, and I am sure I should have no chance with you. Indeed we will not even joke about it, my dear, or the Evil One will try to turn joke into earnest. I once heard my grandmother say that it was very important what people talked about on their wedding morning, and the nearer they got to the church the more important it became. They ought to think only of the good God, and talk of His angels who live in peace and joy together, ministering good things to men,—and to beseech Him to abide with them morning and evening, in the house and in the field, in the heart and in the life,

## 264      Ulric, the Farm Servant

so that no evil spirit should gain power over them, or come between them in any way. She has often told me how uneasy it made her when my father and mother entered the church, laughing and joking, with no thought beyond worldly matters. It was not long before evil spirits came: both were early taken from this world, and we, poor children, were in everybody's way, and given up to ruin, if God, praised be His name, had not taken special pity upon us. But I cannot forget my grandmother's words, and the nearer we get, the more serious my heart becomes. The day of marriage resembles the day of death: one goes through a door and one does not know what is at the other side. There may be happiness or misery—happiness sweeter than we can imagine, or misery greater than we can picture. My heart beats violently! I am almost ashamed, but I cannot hide it.

My father never led my mother to church, said Freneli, and I have had to suffer for it. As long as they lived, I was knocked about and repulsed by every one, but God took pity on the desolate child. Perhaps a pious grandmother prayed for me also, or was sent by the dear Lord to guard and protect me. Ulric, I should not like other poor children to suffer for our sins. I am more seriously disposed than you think, but I have often put on a cheerful air to hide my deep sadness, and driven away tears with laughter to avoid the remarks of others. And God forbid that we should struggle for the mastery! I have given myself to you, and I will obey you as long as you love me; I will not be cross nor quarrelsome, and I will do all I can to make you love me more and more. But if you were to tyrannise, and try to make a slave of me, I believe I should become a terrible woman. You will not do it, however; and I could throw myself into the fire for one who loves me. See, I promise you that I will set the Lord always before me, and we will pray to Him together, when you will. But do not be vexed if I laugh, and sing, and joke: I never feel so good as when I am right glad of heart. My soul then seems to overflow

## The Wedding Takes Place 265

with love to God, and the desire to do something for everyone.

God forbid, said Ulric ; I like laughter and merriment as well as any one, but when I saw the church tower of Muhliwald, my grandmother's saying came into my mind, and I thought that as people go seriously to take the Holy Communion, so, upon every approach to God, they should consider what they are doing, and beg Him to help them to keep their vows. Look ! there are doves flying to meet us, a whole flock ; there are two white ones flying together ; that is a good omen of peace and unity. It is as if God had sent them for our sakes, as a sign that all will be well. Do you not think so ?

Freneli pressed Ulric's hand, and both remained silent, filled with devout thoughts, until the ostler took the reins from Ulric's hand, saying, It is very cold this morning.

It was one of the good old inns which do not change hands every year, but remain in the same family from generation to generation. They were just at breakfast when the pair arrived ; they recognised Ulric, gave them a friendly reception, and insisted on their immediately joining them,—all was quite ready, and nothing would do them so much good on a cold morning as a cup of hot coffee. Freneli said she was ashamed, it was not mannerly to sit down to table as if she was at home. But the hostess had her way, and congratulated Ulric on his charming wife, remarking that it was long since so beautiful a bride had been seen at Muhliwald. She was glad he had prospered so well,—everyone had been sorry when he went away, and they would all rejoice to hear of his welfare. Of course there are always some people, she added, who look askance at the happiness of others, but they are few in number.

Ulric asked if the minister would be up at that hour ; the hostess thought he might, as it was a Friday ; he was not a very early riser ; but he was an old man, and it was therefore excusable. One winter he had a lazy curate who would never see any one before eight o'clock in the

## 266      Ulric, the Farm Servant

morning. Then Ulric asked if it would be according to custom for him to take Freneli with him. No, she said, the bride seldom went to the parsonage until afterwards, when they went together to fetch the certificate. Those who were very shy, or who were afraid of what the parson might say to them, returned directly to the inn after the ceremony, and the bridegroom went alone. Ulric gave directions that a message should be sent to invite his old master and his wife, and set out for the parsonage.

The minister at first did not know him in his handsome clothes, in the imperfectly lighted room; but as soon as he recognised him, he was heartily glad to see him. I have heard, he said, that you are doing well, that you are becoming tenant of a fine farm, you are getting an excellent wife, and you have saved a good deal of money. I rejoice to celebrate a marriage which I believe to be blessed of God. I rejoice in the character which you must have acquired for honesty and godliness before so much would be entrusted to you. Temporal and spiritual good are more nearly connected than people sometimes think. They believe that they must put their Christianity on one side, if they wish to stand well with the world; but it is exactly the opposite, and this false view precipitates many into a life of care and misery. Take yourself for an example, Ulric; if you had continued in your old ways, what kind of a wedding-day would you have had? what kind of a wife? what kind of prospects? Compare that situation with your present one. Judge of the difference. Does it come from blind destiny, or chance, or luck? Would you have had this good fortune if you had remained bad and worthless? The misfortune is, that people wish to become rich through luck and chance, and not through the blessing of God on just and diligent effort. And it is only right that those who depend upon luck are deceived by luck, until they are brought to acknowledge that luck is nothing, and God's blessing is everything.

Yes, sir, said Ulric, I cannot tell you how well off I

## The Wedding Takes Place 267

am, compared to what I was, as one of the worst young men about the county. But there is something in luck after all, or else I should never have got such a good master, and I should have come to nothing.

Oh, Ulric, said the parson, was that luck, or the Providence of God?

It is the same thing, I think, answered Ulric.

Yes, said the minister, you may so understand it, but the way in which you regard it makes all the difference. He who talks of luck does not think of God, seek His favour, or return Him thanks; he seeks luck from and in the world. He who speaks of Providence, thinks of God, thanks Him, seeks His good pleasure, sees His guidance in everything; he knows nothing of good or bad luck, all is to him God's gracious hand, leading him on to blessedness. This different way of speaking is the expression of a different way of thinking, and an altogether different view of life. As there is such a difference in words, it is important which one uses. And if you will observe well, you will see that the talk of luck can only make a man light-hearted or melancholy; but the talk of God's Providence raises good thoughts in us, and lifts our eyes to Him.

Yes, indeed, said Ulric, you are right. I cannot gainsay it.

You will bring your bride to me after the service?

Very gladly, said Ulric, if you desire it; but we shall hinder you.

It will not hinder me, said the parson; it is not only my duty, but my pleasure, to speak a word on these serious occasions; the soil is prepared, and the seed will bring forth fruit.

In the meantime Freneli had drawn off her woollen boots, and put on the pretty Bernese cap, on which the hostess fastened the bridal wreath. She remarked: This is after the Langthäl fashion; but whatever fashion it is, it becomes you well. My fingers burn sometimes when I have to fasten wreaths on the heads of brides who have visibly no right to wear them. I cannot think



## 268      Ulric, the Farm Servant

why there are not stricter laws. It is said that the gentlemen of the government favour the bad as much as the good. I do not know. I have never been in Berne since the Austrians came; but that is what people say. I do not inquire; what have I to do with the gentry? It goes against me when one of them comes to the inn. They are so haughty, that they do not even answer if one gives them a greeting; and if one holds out one's hand, they hesitate to give theirs; they do not take off their gloves, yet they are afraid of soiling them.

The bells began to ring: Ulric grasped Freneli's hand, and walked with her towards the church.

The bride and bridegroom entered the church reverently; they separated, one to the right, the other to the left. They saw a child received into the covenant of the Lord, and thought, if they had ever to present one of their own for baptism, how joyfully they would promise to bring it up in the fear of the Lord. When the pastor stepped back from the font, Ulric brought Freneli, and both stood at the rails; they sank on their knees, clasped each other's hands, prayed and praised as the words directed, and their hearts swelled with indescribable emotion as they took the vow which bound them to each other. When they stood up, they felt steadfast, and of good courage; they were both assured that they had won a treasure for time and for eternity.

Outside the church, Ulric asked his wife to go with him for the certificate. At first she declined, thinking her presence unnecessary. She went, however, and not now in a shamefaced manner, but as the happy wife of an honourable man; and Freneli, as we know, was not deficient in dignity.

The minister received them most kindly. He was a tall, thin, venerable man, one of those who combine seriousness with graciousness of demeanour, so that hearts opened to him as if touched by a magic wand.

When he looked at Freneli, he asked, What think you, Ulric, is it through luck or God's Providence that you have this good wife?

## The Wedding Takes Place 269

Sir, you are right, said Ulric, I regard her as a gift of God.

And you, young mistress, what is your opinion?

I believe, answered Freneli, that the good God has united us.

I believe it also, said he ; but why has He united you ? That you may make each other happy, not only here, but also there—do not forget that. Marriage is God's sanctuary on earth, in which people should sanctify and purify themselves for heaven. You are both good, and pious, and honest, but you have both faults. I know one of yours, for instance, Ulric, which tightens its hold upon you ; it is avarice. You will have some also, Freneli, though I do not know them. These faults will become visible on both sides, your wife will be the first to perceive yours, you will be aware of them from her manner ; and so with hers. Each will be a mirror to the other, a moral power of great influence. From love to your wife, you will try to correct your faults, because she will suffer the most from them ; and you, mistress, must help him with all gentleness. You must also acknowledge your own faults, and try to amend them for Ulric's sake, and he will help you likewise. When this work becomes too difficult, God sends child after child ; each is an angel to sanctify and bless ; each teaches us afresh to present ourselves rightly before God, and implants a new desire to be pleasing to Him. The more you are penetrated by these sentiments, the happier you will be in heaven, and on earth, for believe me, true earthly happiness is found on the way which leads to life eternal. The good God has brought you together that you may help each other, and be a support and staff on the narrow, difficult way ; that you may make a sometimes thorny path more smooth and easy for each other by the gentleness and patience of love. And if evil days come, embittered by the faults of either, do not think it is bad luck that makes you unhappy, but be sure that God, who has known the dispositions of each, has brought you together just for this very purpose, to improve and educate each other.

## 270      Ulric, the Farm Servant

And as love sent the Redeemer to men, as love brought Him to the Cross for men, so love must be your motive power ; it surpasses all others to heal and to amend. People can but oppress each other with complaints and reproaches, with threats and blows ; they cannot make each other better, or more pleasing to God. Generally violence begets violence, and the home becomes a torment. So never forget that God has brought you together, and He will demand each from the hand of the other. Husband, He will say, where is thy wife's soul? Wife, where is thy husband's soul? Act so that you may with one voice reply, Lord, we are both here, at Thy good pleasure. Mistress, forgive me, I have spoken seriously this morning, but it is better to listen now, than for Ulric to suffer through your faults ; it is better for him also, than if he had to reproach himself later for bringing you to misery. But I do not believe such a thing of either of you. You look to me as if God and man would have joy in you both.

Freneli's tears filled her eyes, and she said with an agitated voice, Oh, sir, you shall have thanks a hundred times for this good advice. I shall think of it as long as I live. It will give us great pleasure if you will visit us when you are in our neighbourhood, to see that your words have borne fruit.

The minister said he should probably be able to see them soon ; though they lived a long way off, he should consider them as belonging to his cure, and he hoped they would do the same. No one could rejoice more than he should in their happiness, and if he could serve them in any way they must be sure to let him know.

Then they took leave, glowing with the sense of trust and kindness, which should ever be the result of human intercourse. If this were always so, God's earth would be a happy place.

I like that minister, said Freneli, as they were going out ; he looks at things seriously, and yet he is so truly kind. I could listen to him all day.

When they arrived at the inn, they heard that Farmer

## The Wedding Takes Place 271

Boden had accepted the invitation, but his wife was not able to leave home. Then Freneli said, You must drive off and fetch her ; you will be back again in half-an-hour.

I should not like to distress our horse, said Ulric, he has far enough to go to-day ; but I dare say our host can let me have another for that little distance. \*

The host did so willingly. When Ulric arrived, John was not yet dressed, and his wife had great scruples about spending time in an inn on a week day, unless she was a sponsor. Ulric should have brought his wife to *them*, she said, instead of going to expense at an inn ; they had plenty for them to eat and drink. Ulric said he knew that very well ; but it would have been encroaching on their kindness ; also, it would have been too far, he must get back that day, he had a great deal on his hands now. But they must really come, or he should be grieved, and think that they were ashamed to be seen with them.

How can you talk in that way, Ulric ? said the wife ; you know very well how highly we esteem you. I had better not come, if you have such thoughts.

She got ready, however, but would not allow her daughter to go too, as Ulric wished. Why not have the cat and the dog too ? said she ; it is quite too much for me to go. Only wait, you will find other ways of spending your money. A large household is a serious expense.

Freneli had watched for them eagerly. The passers-by all looked at her, and said, Who is that beautiful bride ? one seldom sees such a handsome woman. The talk about her went through the whole village, and whoever could make any excuse, went over to the inn to look at her.

At last Ulric appeared, with his old mistress, and Freneli received her guests very warmly. So you are married now ! I greet you in God's name, said the farmer's wife ; and stretched out her round plump hand to Freneli : I always thought you were going to be a pair ; no two people could suit each other better.

## 272      Ulric, the Farm Servant

Yes, but there was nothing in it then. They only began to plague me on the way home, and I believe you had a little to do with it, said Freneli, turning to John, and offering him her hand. I shall have something to say to you for disposing of me so finely without my own consent. I ought to be able to pay you out in some way for making arrangements for me behind my back.

John answered in the same style, and Freneli met his words with playful cleverness. When she was away for a moment, the farmer's wife said: 'Ulric, you have a remarkably well-mannered wife. She would not be out of place in any gentleman's house, and she can work as well as she can talk; the two do not always go together. Take care of her, you will never find such another.

Then the tears came into Ulric's eyes, and he praised Freneli until she came back again. Of course they stopped suddenly at her entrance; she looked mischievously from one to the other, and said, Ah, I see you have begun again; a little bird has told me. 'Is it right of you, Ulric, to begin to complain of me as soon as I turn my back?

It has been just the other way, said the farmer's wife; and I have been telling him to take care of you, he would never get such another. If men knew, she added, how things go with a second wife, they would take better care of the first. Not that I have to complain; my husband is a man to be loved and honoured, but I see how it is in other cases.

Ah, Eisi, said John, I was waiting for the end of your speech, my reputation was rather in danger. But you are right; in many cases wives are badly treated; as in others, the husbands are tormented by their wives. The only safeguard of a home is the firm belief that there is a God in heaven, and that we are responsible to Him for ourselves, and for one another.

Then they were invited into the back room, where dinner was served. Freneli acted hostess with graceful kindness, helping, pressing, pouring out; all felt happy, and at ease. Ulric consulted the farmer as to the stable

## The Wedding Takes Place 273

regulation, profitable planting, suitable soil, and culture. John instructed in a fatherly manner, asked questions in return, and Ulric shared his experiences with him. The women listened at first; then Freneli sought counsel in her turn from Eisi, on the hundred and one matters which farmers' wives know so well, telling her how she had managed hitherto, and asking if she might not do better. Eisi unfolded her mysteries with delight, but often said, I dare say your way is as good, but you can try mine. The familiar homeliness attracted the host and hostess, who were sensible people; both helped to advise and suggest, and testified their pleasure in much that they heard. Ulric and Freneli listened with deference to the experiences of the older people, and the afternoon passed very quickly. Suddenly the setting sun threw a golden beam into the room, and illuminated every object. Freneli started up. So late already, she exclaimed, we must be off, Ulric.

You need not hurry, said the hostess, the moon will have risen before it is dark.

How the afternoon has passed, said the farmer's wife; I do not know when the time has seemed so short.

So it has been with me, said the hostess. It is very different with many wedding parties who can do nothing but drink and play, so that one has a weary time of it.

The farmer's wife gave Freneli her hand, saying, You have become very dear to me, and I will not let you go until you promise that you will soon come and see us.

Most willingly, said Freneli, as soon as it is possible; I have felt as if I was talking to a mother; and if we lived nearer, you would perhaps see me too often. But Ulric and I shall have our hands full, and we shall not be able to leave home readily. You must promise to come to us; you have grown-up children, and you know that all will go on just the same in your absence.

Yes, I will come, I promise you. John has said many a time that I should be astonished if I could see the Steinbrücke. And listen to me, if you should ever be in want of a godmother, don't trouble to look far for one.

## 274      Ulric, the Farm Servant

In the meantime, Ulric having paid the bill and had the horse put to, poured out, and urged on everyone the parting cup. Then came the host with a bottle of an old vintage, and said he wished to do honour to the young couple. He was heartily glad they had come to him, and he would give a bottle of his best wine every week, if such people came to be married. John, not to be behindhand, ordered another bottle equally good; and the stars were again shining in the sky, when after a very hearty leavetaking, the fine black horse went quickly off with the happy pair.

At the present time Ulric and Freneli enjoy all the happiness of untroubled love and growing prosperity. Their good name is spread far and wide; they are esteemed by everyone for their excellent conduct, and they aspire to yet higher praise, that their names may be written in heaven.

But this was not accomplished in a day; they had many a hard struggle before they attained to an even path and a steady aim, of which perhaps, if the reader cares to hear, he may yet be told a little in the summer days.

THE END







